

TOM HOLT'S LOG



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Luff—Luff—Polly's overboard.

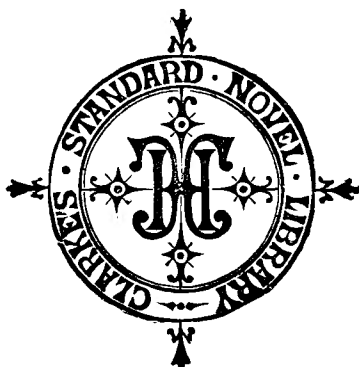
TOM HOLT'S LOG:

A Tale of the Deep Sea.

By W STEPHENS HAYWARD,

AUTHOR OF

"THE BLACK ANGEL," "STAR OF THE SOUTH," "THE FIERY CROSS,
ETC. ETC. ETC.



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TOM HOLT'S LOG:

A TALE OF THE DEEP SEA.

THIS history of the adventures which befell me—of the hardships I endured—the perils I encountered—the strange things I saw—I have written myself: the first part from memory, but the rest and the greater portion compiled from a journal or log I kept, in which I noted down, day by day, every event, however trifling, which befell me. At times I have made long extracts from the log itself, as was the case in the early portion of my extraordinary and protracted cruise or voyage, when I was, through a terrible disaster, alone on the trackless ocean, a sailor lad. At once captain, crew, and owner of a big ship, “monarch of all I surveyed,” of the vessel and cargo, of the vast expanse of sea over which my eye swept, in the vain hope of seeing a sail or land; wafted by the winds, drifted by the currents, whither they pleased—far, far away from the track of ships and from land—a solitary outcast on the bosom of the vasty deep.

What was the fate of Robinson Crusoe to such a solitude as mine? *He* had his goats, his cats, his parrots, and afterwards his man Friday for a companion, and, besides, was on a fertile island, which brought forth in abundance the fruits of the earth; while I trod the deck and kept the weary watches *alone!* I looked around on the broad expanse of sea and stood alone.

No other eye than mine saw the bosom of the great blue ocean; from the ship, far away to the horizon, rising and falling with a slow solemn swell, or with the waves crested with foam—

I was alone!

Those three words express volumes. Mine has, indeed, been a strange career. Perhaps I shall never again set eyes on the white cliffs of Albion—never again revisit my native land.

Should I live, it is my intention to publish this narrative. Should I perish, and this history of my adventures and solitary voyage be found, I beg that some kind friend will preserve it, and send or give it to Captain Copp—address, the *Haven of Rest*, Clayton Hampden, near Bristol—who will do with it as he thinks proper.

Also, I request, that the person who finds this, should I be no more, will add a few words explaining the circumstances as nearly as may be under which I perished.

But, as I write this, I have a strong and earnest hope that I may be destined to return to England and give to the world the history of my adventures.

CHAPTER I.

MY EARLY DAYS.

BEFORE I commence the story of my strange and adventurous career, I must say a few words about my birth and parentage. I don't remember my father. I understood that he died abroad whilst I was a child. My mother used never to mention his name, but I believe that he was a proud man, superior to herself in station, and that he was unkind to her. I understood also, by stray words dropped here and there by acquaintances (my mother never spoke on the subject), that for many years before his death he had lived apart from her, allowing her a very inadequate income, considering his means and position.

I think I was about seven years old when his death occurred.

I knew it by seeing my mother put on a black dress and an ugly cap, and also because I myself was put into a new black suit.

From this time, until I was fourteen years of age,

there occurred no event worth chronicling. We lived in a little cottage near the town of Southampton. My mother kept no servant, but usually an old woman used to come and help wash, and so forth.

Until I was ten years of age mother herself taught me, but shortly after that time I went to a day school—taking my dinner with me in the morning, and returning to tea at night.

I had few acquaintances among boys of my own age, and not one whom I could call a friend, so it may seem that my early life was a very dull and monotonous one.

I was as a boy always quiet and studious, fond of reading, and of mechanical and scientific recreation.

I was always making models of boats, carriages, or anything which I saw and thought it was possible for me to imitate.

I attended to my school duties, and soon was very fairly proficient in reading, writing, arithmetic, English history, and the groundwork of education.

My mother encouraged my taste for books and for quiet pursuits, as she had a horror of a life of turmoil and excitement, and hoped that her son would adopt some trade or profession by which he might earn an honest and respectable livelihood, and lead a virtuous and calm life in his native country, respected by others and by himself.

Among the books which in my leisure hours I read with avidity, there were many relating to travels, discoveries, and adventures of such men as Captain Cook, Francis Drake, Mungo Park, and many others.

By degrees there grew up in my breast an ardent longing to see more of the world than was contained within our island. But when I spoke of such a wish, my mother always replied discouragingly, and, so to say, threw cold water on the idea, declaring that the books I had read gave highly coloured and untrue accounts of the lives of those men whom I looked upon as fortunate heroes, and that the hardships and misery they endured more than compensated for the fame they gained and the pleasure of exploring foreign countries.

Moreover, that while one was successful, and returned

home to end his days in England, a hundred perished miserably.

I was a dutiful son, and did not attempt to argue with my mother, who was fondly attached to me, and whom I loved and venerated. But, nevertheless, the thoughts which reading about the adventures of others had instilled into my breast were not driven away, and as I grew in years the desire to travel and see the world increased.

After I had attained my fifteenth year a sad event occurred—I lost my mother.

She was taken ill of a fever, and died after a short illness, and I found myself alone in the world.

I had heard her speak of an uncle, her brother, whom she called Captain Copp, and understood he was not on friendly terms with her. Why, I knew not; for when she did mention him, it was in terms of affection and respect.

He came the very day she died—in the evening—and she had breathed her last early in the morning.

Wrapt up as I was in my own grief, I saw that he was deeply affected.

He did not weep or sob like myself, but knelt down by the side of the bed on which the body lay, and there remained for many minutes with his face hidden.

I saw him thus as I peeped into the room, and then withdrew into the little parlour, and again burst into tears at the thought of the kind mother I had lost.

I looked up when he entered the room, and beheld an elderly man, with iron-grey hair and a brown rugged face. There was something, however, in the expression which, though it was sad enough, inspired me with an instinctive liking.

He was dressed in trousers and pilot jacket of stout blue cloth, and wore an old straw hat on his head. I had not been in the habit of seeing sailors, but I at once knew that my uncle was, or had been, a seafaring man.

He looked at me for a moment or two in silence, and then said,—

“My lad, this is a sad affair; you and I are alone in

the world now, for neither of us has any other relation. We must see what's to be done. I wish I could have been in time to see my poor sister before she went aloft, and hear what she thought was the best thing for you to do. My heart smites me, lad! I'm a wicked old man; I'd no business to keep away from my own sister for so many years, when she'd no friend to look to but me—no one to cheer her up under her troubles; and all for the sake of a foolish quarrel, because she'd got a will of her own, like me. However, the Lord's will be done! We must make the best of it."

Without saying any more, he turned and walked out into the little garden, when I noticed, for the first time, that he had a wooden leg.

I saw but little of my uncle whilst the preparations for the funeral were going on, and when I did meet him he said very few words.

He astonished me on the morning of the funeral by saying,—

"What's your name, my lad?"

"What a strange thing!" I said to myself; "my own uncle—my mother's brother—not to know my name!"

However, I replied,—

"Thomas Holt, sir."

"Very well, Tom. Don't call me sir, though; other people call me Captain Copp; you can call me uncle."

"Yes, uncle," I said; and then he stumped away, and I did not see him again until we set out to follow my poor mother to the grave.

After the funeral he beckoned me to his side, and we walked on homeward together in silence for some distance.

"Tom, my lad," he said, "do you know where your mother is?"

I looked at him in sad surprise, and answered, as the tears started,—

"Yes, uncle, in the churchyard."

"You're wrong, my lad—you're wrong. She's up there" (pointing with his finger to the sky); "up there with the angels, looking down on us mortals! Don't forget that, Tom, she's up there!"

I said nothing, while he took out a plug of tobacco, cut off a piece, and put it in his mouth.

The rest of that day he scarcely spoke to me. In the evening, however, he said abruptly,—

“Tom, my boy, get all your things ready; tell the old woman to help you. I’ll settle with her, and the doctor, and the lawyer, and all the rest of ’em. Get your dunnage ready, for you’re coming with me to-morrow back to the ship.”

“Back to the ship!” My heart leaped at the words. I had always heard that my uncle had long since ceased to go to sea, and was at a loss to understand what he meant by going back to the ship.

I could only suppose that, despite his wooden leg, of which I had never before heard, he had again taken up with the sea.

The old woman he spoke of was one who used to come in occasionally to help my poor mother, and had nursed her in her last illness.

She was looked on more in the light of a faithful friend than anything else, and, I am sure, felt her death deeply.

In the morning Captain Copp came round early.

“Now, my lad,” he said, “come for a walk with me; we’re going to leave this for the ship at one o’clock, and before we start I want to have a bit of a talk with you—tell you how the land lies, and so on.”

“The ship! how the land lies!” I thought; “I suppose he will explain to me all about it.”

We started out, and as soon as my uncle had filled his pipe, he commenced,—

“I want to tell you a little about yourself, and about me, and things in general,” he said, and then paused, stumping along in silence for several minutes, as if calling to his memory the substance of what he was going to say.

“My name is John Copp—Captain John Copp—retired mariner, and a man who’s seen a deal of service afloat and ashore, and has now come to an anchor till the Commodore up aloft chooses to condemn his old hulk and break it up.”

He paused, and puffed away at his pipe, while I puzzled over the meaning of his strange words.

He had spoken of going back to the ship before, and now said that he was a retired mariner, come to an anchor for life, as I understood him.

I knew not how to reconcile the two statements, so gave it up and waited till he spoke again.

"Your mother's name was Jane Copp, sister of said John Copp, who, when she was a young and beautiful woman, married Edward Stanton Holt, your father, a man with a good fortune and a bad heart."

Again a pause, during which he stumped along in silence, puffing slowly and deliberately at his pipe.

"You are Thomas Holt, son of said Jane and Edward Stanton Holt, the man who married your mother, with a good fortune and a bad heart, and then deserted her."

"Deserted her, uncle!—I thought he was dead?"

"Yes, deserted her; and no, he's not dead; he left her and married another woman, and out of all his money only gave my poor dead sister enough to buy this cottage and bring her in about seventy pounds a year."

"But, uncle," I said, "I thought no one could marry two women; at least, without being sent to prison?"

"Ay, that's just it," he said, vehemently, as, taking his pipe from his mouth, he came to a dead halt; "that's just it; that was the rock we split upon—your mother and me. 'Prosecute the scoundrel,' I said.

"'I shan't,' said she; 'he's my husband, and the father of my child.'

"'Then,' said I, 'if you don't I'll have no more to do with you.'

"'You must do as you please, brother,' said she; 'I must do what I think is right. I bear him no malice, and I hope God may forgive him. It shall never be said that my boy's father was sent to prison as a common felon.'

"'Your boy's father is a scoundrel, Jane,' said I.

"'That may be,' she said; 'but were he ten times

as bad as he is, I, his wife, would never seek to harm him.'

" 'Jane,' I said, 'your husband has deserted you for another woman; you have only me, your brother, now. If you don't prosecute that man I'll have nothing more to do with you.'

" 'As you please, John. But when I'm dead, if I die first, I charge you, by the memory of our mother, to take care of my boy.'

" 'Jane,' said I, 'once for all, consent to prosecute that man, or I'll never speak to you again.'

" 'No, John,' she said, 'I will not.'

" Thus we parted—never to meet again on earth.

" She kept her word, and I kept mine. She was right and I was wrong. May God forgive me!"

Then there was another long pause, and presently I stole a look at my uncle's face as we walked on, and saw a tear run down his rugged cheek.

I was too much astonished and shocked at what I had just been told, in so singular a manner, to say anything.

" This is how the land lies at present," he went on presently. " You, Thomas Holt, the only child of my poor sister, and a lad of fourteen, without a friend or relation in the world except myself, the said John Copp. I, John Copp, have no relation in the world except you, the said Thomas Holt; I behaved very bad to your mother when she was alive; I can't bring her to life again, so I'll do all I can by taking care of you, the said Thomas Holt, the son of my dead sister, and launching you fairly in the world.

" Enough said, Captain Copp's as good as his word, never shirked his duty or told a lie in his life. Let's go back to the cottage and see about starting off to the ship."

" Where is the ship, uncle?" I said.

" A long way from this, my lad—near Bristol; but what does that matter? If it was in Kamschatka or the South Pole I'd take you on board, if I had to carry you on my back, for your poor mother's sake. Come on, my lad; I'll find you a bunk and a mess, never fear."

We returned to the cottage, and packing up all my little store in a box, I prepared to leave the abode of my childhood for ever.

I stopped at the gate of the garden and looked back on the little cottage, all along the front of which honeysuckle and ivy had been trained. There was the little porch before the door, with a bench on either side, in which on so many, many occasions my poor mother and I had sat on quiet sunny evenings—she busy sewing, I intent on some book, or working away with my knife and chisel at some model I was constructing, or boy's toy.

Alas! those days were gone, never, never to return. As I stood and gazed on the little place, the thatched roof, the quaint chimney, and the diamond-square windows, surrounded by climbing roses, my eyes filled with tears.

Never had the little home and the pretty garden, kept in such excellent order, looked so charming as now that I was going to leave for ever.

As I turned away, tears welled up to my eyes and streamed down my face. A fly was in waiting to take us to the station, and with a heavy heart I bade a long farewell to the home of my youth, and was whirled away by the train, perhaps never to return.

My uncle, seeing how miserable I was, did his best to cheer me up, and in the course of the journey told me more about myself and my prospects. My mother had invested all the money she had in the purchase of a joint annuity for our two lives—hers and mine; she had also left the cottage and contents to me; thus, when I came of age, I should have about seventy pounds a year and a home.

A great portion of her little income died with her, and my uncle, whom she had appointed her executor and my guardian, told me that I should have thirty pounds a year before I came of age, and that until that time he would have the disposal of the like sum yearly, which he should expend on my education, and in furthering my prospects.

"Of course, my lad, you'll have the run of your knife and fork as long as you like to stay with me; and if

ever, in after years, you want a helping hand, all you'll have to do is to come to Captain Copp."

"And the cottage, uncle," I asked, "what will become of that?"

"The old woman who nursed your mother will live in that till her time comes, or till you come of age; then you'll be captain of your own ship, and can do what you like with your own."

CHAPTER II.

WE ARRIVE AT THE "HAVEN OF REST."—A WONDERFUL SHIP.

ARRIVED at Bristol, my uncle took me to an inn facing the port. He had some business with a lawyer, he said, relating to my mother's will, which would detain him in the town for two days, and he decided to stop until it was finished.

"You can amuse yourself as you like, my lad; cruise about town; look at the shops or the ships, which is a fine sight to my thinking. Remember—breakfast at eight bells; dinner at noon; supper in the second dog watch."

Some of this was Greek to me, but I soon ascertained that by breakfast at eight bells my uncle meant eight o'clock in the morning, and by supper in the "second dog watch," some time between six and eight in the evening.

The more I saw of the quaint bluff old man—he was more than twenty years older than my mother—the more I liked him. Beneath his odd manner and abrupt way there was genuine kindness of heart.

He was obstinate, and when he once said a thing he stuck to it,—“nailed his colours to the mast,” as he himself expressed it.

He was honourable and honest, true as steel, and in many respects simple as a child.

He was, though over sixty years of age, still a hearty

man, and often said but for his timber leg he was good for ten years' more cruising.

After supper, on the first evening we spent in Bristol, he spun the first sea-yarn I had ever heard, relating how he lost his leg.

I need not repeat it here, but may briefly say that it was an encounter with pirates off the coast of Borneo.

His ship was becalmed, and when night came on was surrounded by a crowd of canoes and two large junks from the shore. The attack lasted all night. Several times the pirates gained possession of a part of the deck of the ship, but were driven off by desperate charges on the part of the men, headed by himself, their captain. Every man was wounded among the whites, and seven killed outright. He himself received five wounds, but still kept the deck and gave orders until the bone of his left leg was smashed by a shot from one of the pirates' heavy guns. Even then he continued to give orders as he lay on a skylight covered with a tarpaulin, in spite of the pain of his wounds.

The pirates were kept at bay until a breeze arose, and the vessel was enabled to sail away from the scene of the disaster.

Seventeen men in all were killed during the fight, or died of their wounds afterwards; for unfortunately the surgeon himself was killed towards the close of the battle.

The Captain lost his leg, which was amputated as soon as they arrived in port, and many others of the crew were crippled for life by the wounds they received.

It was a long story, to every word of which I listened with breathless attention. I have heard a great many yarns since then, but never have I come across a yarn-spinner equal to my uncle, Captain Copp. He had the singular faculty of prolonging a story, of lengthening it out by diverging off into other topics, and yet keeping up the interest of his listeners.

On the morning of the third day we started for my uncle's ship.

Several times I had asked him about this mysterious vessel, but could get no direct reply. He would chuckle in a quiet manner, and tell me that she was safely

moored,—that I should go on board of her before long, or something of the kind; and at last I forebore to question him.

After half an hour's journey by rail from Bristol, we got out at a station.

"We've just a four-mile walk, my lad," he said; "the carrier's cart will bring your luggage on in the evening. I'm a quiet man myself, and can't bear my ship to be anchored near one of these noisy railways, though I don't say but what they're useful."

The more I thought, the more puzzled I became as to this ship. I knew that we had been travelling in a direction away from the Bristol Channel, and certainly the country in which I now found myself had nothing in common with a maritime place. We walked along good roads, between fields of corn, or threaded quiet country lanes. After travelling for about an hour, my uncle said,—

"We're getting close to the ship, now; almost within hail, I may say."

In a few minutes we were in the street of a village—a long street, with thatched cottages on either side, here and there a public-house, or one which, by the barns and yard surrounding, was evidently a farmyard.

But no signs of sea, or anything at all suggestive of a ship. Presently we turned to the left, up a little road, and came on to a green of short smooth turf. At one end of this green was the village church; at the other a farmhouse and rickyards.

Between these there stretched a mud wall covered with thatch, common in country places; and in nearly the centre of this there was a wooden gate or door; on either side of this door above were two carved wooden figures, which I put down as the figure-heads of ships.

One was that of an old man with a venerable beard and hair.

"That's Neptune," said my uncle, quietly; "ship o' mine once; and the other, the gal's head and shoulders, is the Minerva, another ship of mine."

I looked puzzled, and he explained—"I didn't mean

they are my own ships, but that I was skipper of 'em both, and sailed a good many voyages in 'em one time and another."

If I had been astonished before, what next occurred utterly bewildered me. My uncle put his hand to his mouth, and in a loud gruff voice, that might have been heard half-a-mile off, shouted, "Ship, ahoy!"

In a very few seconds I heard the sound of footsteps approaching, and then, "Hullo! what ship's that?"

The voice, small and soft, evidently that of a child or young girl.

"Captain Copp, of this port, homeward bound from Bristol," shouted my uncle in the same loud gruff voice.

There were several people, men and women, crossing the green, but none seemed a bit astonished at this extraordinary behaviour on the part of the old Captain.

As for me, I was speechless, and felt as though I must be in a dream.

The door in the wall opened, and I beheld the owner of the voice, a girl apparently about twelve or thirteen years of age.

She was a pretty little thing, with great dreamy grey eyes, and an abundance of fair hair, which fell in wild profusion over her shoulders.

Her feet were bare, at which I wondered a good deal, although, for the matter of that, it was a hot summer's day, and she had only run over a smooth piece of turf, and a still smoother gravel walk. Still I was used to associate bare feet only with the children of the very poor and wretched, and this girl was quite clean and bright looking, and very nicely dressed.

"Coming on board, sir?" the child asked.

"Yes, my boy; run and tell the boatswain to man the gangway, and get the ladder over. Captain's coming on board."

Another mystery! he called the child "my boy," whereas she was evidently a girl. No boy ever had such a face, or such a profusion of hair, which fell below the waist.

"Well, there must be a ship anyhow quite close," I said to myself; but *where?*—that's the puzzle!

The mystery, however, was soon solved, and in a manner which, so to say, mystified me more than ever.

"That's my cabin-boy," said my uncle, as he led the way across the turf, towards a high box hedge.

"Boy, uncle! it's a girl, isn't it?" I said, doubtfully.

"Girl, nonsense! no girls aboard my ship, nor women either, except passengers and visitors, and I seldom have either of that sort o' craft. Polly's my cabin-boy, and boy I call her, though, for the matter of that," he added reflectively, "I suppose she is a girl by rights."

I began to understand him in a slight degree: the girl did duty as a cabin-boy, so, from habit, he called her a boy,—a strange fancy, certainly; but then Captain Copp was a strange man, and no mistake.

Arrived at the box hedge, my uncle led the way through a narrow gap, and I suddenly found myself on a smaller lawn, sloping gently from us. In the centre of this I beheld a strange object.

The Captain stopped and surveyed it with evident pride and satisfaction.

"That's the *Haven of Rest*. What do you think of her?"

"*Haven of Rest*—what do I think of her?" I repeated to myself, as I stood gazing with open mouth at what I beheld.

I was so utterly puzzled and confounded by all I had seen and heard as to be scarcely able to reply.

"What do I think of her? I think she's a very nice little girl—cabin-boy, I mean, uncle," I added, hastily, fearful of offending him.

"No, no—dash it all!" (The Captain did not say "dash it" exactly, but that will do as well, and looks better in print. For the future, in the course of this story, wherever the reader sees a "d" followed by a dash, thus, d—, he will understand that it means dash, and not trouble himself about the exact sound the Captain made.) "No, no, dash it all! not the boy, but the ship—the *Haven of Rest*. Ain't she a beauty! eh, my boy?"

And with the words he slapped me heartily on the shoulder, and stumped along towards the said *Haven of Rest*.

"Come along, I'll take you on board, and you shall sign articles, and then we'll splice the main brace."

I looked and looked as I walked slowly after him, and gradually the truth dawned upon me.

This was the ship of which he had spoken.

There was the great black hull, painted with white ports, as I had seen in pictures, and in the harbour at Bristol. But there was no water. It was a ship on the land, a small portion of the lower timbers appearing to be imbedded in the earth; a great chain came out of the bows, and following the direction of this I saw that it was attached to an anchor, one of the flukes of which was also buried in the ground. I saw that there were three masts, and that there was an awning spread over the deck.

I was still gazing in stupid amazement, when my uncle called me.

"Come along, lad—come along, let's get aboard. Never keep the gangway waiting."

Hereupon I followed him up some wooden steps which were lowered over the side down to the ground, and we entered through a large gap in the bulwarks which did the duty of door, and I found myself on board the *Haven of Rest*.

No sooner did the Captain step on the deck than my ears were assailed by a shrill whistling sound, which I afterwards learned was caused by an instrument called the boatswain's pipe, that an old man, who stood ready to receive the Captain, was vigorously blowing. He kept up this shrill whistling for fully half a minute, my uncle the while waiting with the utmost gravity until he had finished.

"All well on board, Ben?"

"All well, sir."

"Crew behaved themselves while I've been ashore?"

"Yes, sir."

"Very good, Ben. This young chap, Ben, is my nephew. I'm going to make him second mate of the

brig. He's Mr. Holt—a handle to his name, Ben; do you understand?"

"I hope I've been long enough at sea and on board this ship, Captain, to know how to speak to an officer, especially being an officer myself."

"Quite right, Ben. Mr. Holt, this is Mr. Beam, chief mate of the ship. As we're rather short-handed, he does boatswain's duty too."

"Yes, uncle, I understand," I said, though I was completely in a fog.

"Mr. Holt, I'm not uncle on board my ship, I'm Captain Copp."

This he said with some severity.

"However, come down into the cabin," he said, "and you shall sign articles."

So I followed him along the deck to what I considered a hole, down which we descended by some dozen stairs, and I found myself in the cabin of the *Haven of Rest*. It was fitted up in every way as a ship's cabin—in fact, it was a ship's cabin—with bulkheads, and sleeping berths with sliding doors on either side. There was a table in the centre, running fore and aft, and at the after end of this table was a wooden arm-chair, secured to the deck, in which the Captain seated himself with his back to the mast, which came down from the deck above, and passed through the deck beneath their feet.

Muskets and cutlasses were ranged around this in racks. There was a swinging lamp over the table, and a barometer and compass were also suspended over the Captain's seat.

"Sit down, Mr. Holt," said my uncle.

I did so, and he cried—

"Steward!"

"Sir!" answered that functionary; and in a moment an old woman appeared and stood waiting for orders.

"Get me the log-book and the ship's articles out of my cabin."

"Ay, ay, sir," replied the old woman, and disappearing, quickly returned with them.

"Boy," cried the Captain, "call Mr. Beam."

"Ay, ay, sir," cried the girl with the beautiful hair.

Away she went, her bare feet pattering on the deck as she ran forward to execute the Captain's orders.

"Mr. Beam," said my uncle, solemnly, "I wish you to be present, as is usual, to witness this young man sign articles. You're about to ship, Mr. Holt," he said, turning to me, "for a twelvemonth's cruise in the barque *Haven of Rest*. Destination—at present laid up in dock. I will read the articles over to you."

He did so, but I must confess I did not understand much of what he said.

"Now sign here, my lad," he said, pointing to a place on the broad sheet.

I signed, and then he proceeded, after drying the ink with blotting-paper, to fill up the articles carefully.

"Boy, take these articles and put them in the locker in my cabin."

"Ay, ay, sir," said the girl cabin-boy, and away she went, like a little fairy.

The Captain now proceeded to make an entry in the log-book, which Mr. Beam—or Ben, as he had called him first—witnessed, by affixing his signature.

"That will do for the present, Mr. Beam."

"Very good, sir."

"Steward," said my uncle to the old woman, "bring some biscuits and cheese; I am hungry, and I dare say Mr. Holt is too. We don't have supper till the second dog watch, as you know."

I merely nodded in reply, and occupied myself in gazing around on all I saw, and wondering whatever it could mean.

Not the least curious part of it to me was being called Mr. Holt. I had never been addressed so in my life, and would as soon have thought of being spoken to as Your Highness, or My Lord.

The biscuits and cheese were brought, also a bottle of pale ale, all of which I greatly enjoyed, as I was both hungry and thirsty.

"Boy," said the Captain, when we had finished, "go forward and tell the boatswain to pipe all hands aft."

"Ay, ay, sir," replied the little girl; and away she

went again—her long fair hair flying in the wind behind her.

Then, again, there was a shrill whistling, which lasted longer than before; and shortly after that the boatswain—or the mate, or Ben, or Mr. Beam, for he seemed to be either or all of these—came into the cabin and stood at the foot of the table.

The old woman whom my uncle dignified with the name of steward took up a position on one side of him, and the girl—or boy, as he called her—stood on the other side.

Then the Captain addressed them in the following brief speech:—

“My lads, we’ve just got a new shipmate on board the barque; I hope he will do his duty, and that you will all do your duty—obey all his lawful orders, remembering that he is second mate of the good ship *Haven of Rest*.

“Boy!”

“Sir?” cried the girl.

“Splice the main brace.”

Away she flew on this errand. I had not the least idea of what it was, but thought she was very quick in doing it; for in less than half a minute she returned with a stand containing bottles and five glasses. My uncle helped himself, and then handed the bottles to me.

“Help yourself, Mr. Holt, to some of the brandy or schiedam.”

I poured a little brandy into my glass and filled it up with water. Ben—or Mr. Beam, I should say—filled his glass two-thirds full, and took very little water. The old woman took a good dose, while the girl poured out about half a teaspoonful, and then adding some water, made a wry face and drank it.

This formality concluded, the three of them went away—the old man forward, and the woman and child disappearing behind the mast. This proceeding was another mystery to me. When I heard my uncle order the “crew aft,” I expected to see a lot of great brawny sailors—twenty of them at least—come

pouring into the cabin. Presently I ventured to inquire,—

"Uncle," I said, "I mean Captain Copp—I thought you sent for the crew; why didn't they come?"

"Ha, hem!—well, you see, my lad, we're rather short-handed. In fact, we're always short-handed. That's the crew you saw—Mr. Beam is chief mate and boatswain, and the boy and steward make up the rest of the crew. Now you can go and amuse yourself on deck for an hour; look about you and get used to the ship; learn the ropes you see, and make yourself at home. I'm going to turn into my hammock for a couple of hours; supper at six bells; set the anchor watch at 8 P.M.; then you can do what you please—go ashore, if you like. Polly—the boy, I mean—will show you over the place."

Polly, or the boy, evidently heard the old man's last words, for she came out from her retreat behind the mast, and followed me out of the cabin and went on deck.

So soon as we were alone, she looked me in the face, and with a merry laugh said,—

"You're Captain Copp's nephew? Isn't it all fun!"

Evidently her life, though a singular one enough, was a pleasant one, for she looked the very picture of happiness and good humour.

"Yes, I'm Captain Copp's nephew; who are you?"

"I'm Polly when I'm ashore, but on board the ship I'm the cabin-boy," she said demurely.

"Yes, I know that," I said, beginning to get used to the strange arrangement of Captain Copp; "but I mean who are your friends, for I don't think uncle has any relation, except me."

"Ah!" replied Polly, "I understand. You mean, whose child am I?"

"Yes."

"Well, I've got no father or mother."

"You are like me, then," I replied with a sigh.

"What! have you no father or mother? Ah! that is very bad," she said, with an air of profound pity. "I

had a father and mother once. My mother died a long, long time ago, and my father was killed."

Leaning over the bulwarks of the ship, and looking out on the pleasant green turf and garden, I inquired how he was killed.

"Have you ever heard Captain Copp tell about the fight with the pirates?"

"Yes," I replied, "he told me all about it last night."

"Ah! isn't he a beautiful story-teller? I sit sometimes for hours listening to him."

"But what about the fight with the pirates?" I asked.

"Well, you know, my father was on board. He was a great friend of Captain Copp's, and was his chief mate. It was in that fight that Captain Copp had his leg shot off. That was not so bad as my father was served, for you know your uncle had a wooden leg made."

The little girl paused here, and looked out to windward at the sky, the appearance of which, although the sun was still shining brightly, seemed to forbode a storm.

She shook her head with the utmost gravity, and then gazed aloft at the masts, exactly as might an old sailor.

"What are you looking at?" I asked.

"I was just looking aloft and thinking it was a good thing we'd sent the topmasts down. I think we're going to have a breeze. The glass has been falling for some days."

"What do you mean by sending the topmasts down?" I said. "I thought the masts were very short, but I didn't know there were any others to go on the top of them."

"Why, of course there are," said the child, looking in my face with an air of contemptuous surprise. "Do you mean to say you did not know that?"

"No, indeed I didn't."

"Ah! then you'll never do for our second mate. But the Captain won't mind you, as you're his nephew."

"Do you mean to say, then, that you know all about a ship's rigging, and so on?"

"Of course I do," she said, looking at me wonderingly; "I have had to learn it all the same as my lessons at school."

I felt inclined to laugh, but she spoke with such perfect gravity, that I could scarcely doubt that she was serious.

"And you really know the names of all the ropes and everything belonging to the ship?"

"Yes."

"What rope is this, then?" I asked, laying my hand on one.

"That is the port fore-brace," said the child, after a glance aloft.

"And what is it for?"

"Why, to swing the fore-yard round, of course," she replied promptly.

"You haven't told me how your father was killed yet," I remarked. "You said it was much worse for him than for Captain Copp."

"Yes, because your uncle had his leg shot off, and he got a wooden one. But my father had his head shot off, and you see he couldn't have a wooden one made."

"No, I should think not," I said, smiling. "How long have you been with Captain Copp?"

"Oh, ever so long!" she said. "I came here before we built the ship, when the Captain lived in a house in the village."

I thought this a good opportunity to get as much information as I could about the origin of the extraordinary arrangements which had so astonished me.

"And did you build the ship here?"

"I didn't help build it, because I was too little; but I used to come and see them at work."

"Who built it?" I asked.

"The Captain and old Ben, and two shipwrights from Bristol did it all. Sometimes men in the village came to help, but not often."

"And how long did it take? Do tell me all about it."

"Well, I will. You know the Captain lived in a house when I first came to live here, and old Ben and his wife

(that's the steward, you know) they lived with him. Well, the Captain didn't like his house, so he said he'd build one; and he bought this piece of ground, which goes from the wall right down to the river."

"What, is there a river?"

"Yes; not a big river. I've heard the Captain say it was a part of the Severn."

"Well, go on."

"After he'd bought the land, he made up his mind to build a ship instead of a house. He said it would be much less trouble, and a deal more comfortable and natural. So they set to work and built the ship. The Captain says it's on the model of the first ship he ever sailed in, and he called it the *Haven of Rest* because he's going to end his days here, after a life of toil."

"Didn't you find it very strange, Polly," I asked, "after living in a house, to come to a ship, and be called 'cabin-boy,' and all that sort of thing?"

"No, I don't think I thought it strange: I know it seemed great fun. It's ever so much better than a dull stupid house."

"Well, I suppose I shall get used to it in time. I wish you'd show me about this house—the ship, I mean—Polly, so that when uncle asks me anything I might not look such a simpleton."

"Come along, then," cried Polly. "We'll begin right astern."

Away she ran right to the stern of the ship, and I followed her.

"This is the taffrail," she said, laying her hand on a strong rail at the extreme end of the ship.

"And this is the tiller, and this the wheel—the tiller moves the rudder, and the wheel moves the tiller, and so at sea the ship is steered."

"And what's this box with that curious thing in it like a clock-face, only covered with all sorts of black marks and figures?"

"The box is the binnacle, you stupid! and the other is the compass."

Next we came to the mizen-mast, which was duly pointed out to me by my child instructress, and so on,

until we came to the bows of the ship, where we finished with the bowsprit and the jibboom.

"And now," said Polly, "if you like, we will go on shore, and I will take you down to the river and show you something else. But I must run and put my shoes and stockings on first, for there are rough stones which will cut my feet."

"Very well, Polly; I'll go down the ladder on to the ground—go ashore, I suppose you'd call it—and wait for you."

I walked to and fro, and all around this vessel—the offspring of my uncle's strange fancy—and thought over the subject.

Finally, I came to the conclusion that it was only a harmless hobby of the old man's, and resolved to enter into the spirit of the thing, just for fun.

Some people might have pronounced the retired seaman mad, or at all events a little touched, but I saw no reason for anything of that kind.

It was his whim, and if he chose to gratify it without injuring others, why should he not? Not only did he indulge in his hobby without injuring others, but with absolute benefit, for he maintained old Ben and his wife, and the little girl Polly, and yet contrived that his benevolence should not seem like charity, for, as he put it, they were all a part of his crew, each had his post and duties, and thus, as I afterwards discovered, life on board the *Haven of Rest* was as quiet and happy as it is possible to conceive.

There was always work to be done, just enough to keep the Captain and his crew pleasantly employed. Nor would my uncle's natural kindness of heart permit him to shut himself up in his ship and keep himself aloof from the villagers.

He was liberal, though judicious in his charities. Not a farmer in the village did so much for the poor in the winter time as the skipper of the *Haven of Rest*.

In the first place, I afterwards found he had a barge-load of coal, bought in the course of the winter, which was all distributed to the poor.

He made no gifts in money, as a rule, for, with prac-

tical wisdom quite sufficient to refute any idea of his madness, he said that, with a given sum, he could do them twice as much good by expending it himself, as in doling it out.

Take, for instance, the barge-load of coal, about thirty tons: the same quantity would have cost more than twice as much purchased retail as by the Captain's plan of getting it direct from a collier, in the port of Bristol, and hiring a barge to bring it up.

I take advantage of the absence of Polly to put on her shoes and stockings to make these remarks.

Here she comes! so now we are off together down to the stream, which is a branch of the river Severn, and navigable for barges.

Polly kept her word, and had, indeed, something to show me, for, when we reached the bank, I saw, moored out in the stream, the most fairy-like little vessel I had ever seen.

It was only a good-sized boat, but was completely rigged, fore and aft, as a full-rigged ship—masts, ropes, sails, everything.

"There!" said Polly, with just pride, "isn't she pretty? I helped rig her; I made nearly all the sails myself—that is, I sewed the canvas together; of course I couldn't cut them out, or fix them to the bolt ropes. It takes a regular sailor to do that, and Captain Copp and old Ben did it."

Polly went prattling on, pointing out to me the minute perfection of everything on board the little model ship, for she could scarcely be called anything else.

"And can you really sail in her?" I asked.

"Sail in her! I should think so indeed. We often go for a sail when there is a nice breeze—not too strong, you know, for she is not like a big ship. Oh! it is fun. Wait till Captain Copp takes you—won't you like it, that's all! Last time we sailed six miles down the river and then cast anchor, and the Captain gave all hands leave to go on shore. It was haymaking time, and we anchored just off a field. We all went and helped them, and then, in the evening, the Captain gave them some money, and they went to the village and got a lot of

eggs, and bread and butter, and everything you could think of, and we lit a fire, and all had tea in the open air by the side of the river. It was full moon, and nearly as light as day when we started and sailed back—and all the haymakers gave us three cheers as we weighed anchor and sailed away, and ran along the banks waving their hats, and shouting out good luck to us all and the *Fairy*—that's the name of the little ship, you know. Oh! it was such fun! I dare say we shall go oftener now that you're come. The Captain wants one more to right her comfortably. He won't let me move about the ship. I'm obliged to sit quite still, because, you see, I can't swim; so old Ben and he have to do it nearly all. Of course you can swim?"

"No, indeed, I can't."

"Not swim!" she cried, lifting up her eyebrows. "Well, I never! Oh! you must learn directly, or else the Captain won't take you. And besides, if you can't swim, you'll never do for a sailor. Why, if you were to fall overboard you'd be drowned before they could lower a boat to pick you up. Not able to swim—the idea!"

I really felt quite ashamed of myself, so contemptuously did the little lady speak of my shortcomings. I was immensely amused at her pretty prattle, so innocent and artless. Brought up, as she had been, under the fostering wing of the old sailor, she had imbibed quite a contempt for all landmen, and looked upon sailors as the only people in the world really worth anything. To hear her rattle out nautical words and phrases in the most quiet and self-possessed manner, was to me a matter of both astonishment and amusement.

In heart and thought she was quite a little sailor; like a young sapling, her thoughts had early been bent in that direction, and now her mind steadily grew as it had been originally inclined.

The time passed rapidly as I listened to Polly's interesting talk, from which, moreover, I received not only amusement, but a great deal of useful information as to the mode of life at the *Haven of Rest*.

I looked forward with real pleasure to the prospect of the kind of life she described as led at the ship.

Boy like, I took no thought of the future, nor troubled myself as to what profession or pursuit I would adopt, but only considered how jolly it would be to live in a ship ashore, and go sailing in the *Fairy*, and be as happy as the day is long.

Clang—clang—clang—clang.

The sound of a bell, struck sharply four times, was borne on the evening air.

"Four bells," cried Polly. "Goodness gracious! I must run and get the supper-table ready. I've only half an hour."

Away she went, bounding up the sloping ground from the river like a young fawn, while I followed more steadily, thinking over all I had seen and heard on this my first day on board Captain Copp's ship.

Here I will close this chapter, trusting that though long, and without any stirring incident, the reader has not found it tedious.

Let it be remembered that every ship must have a keel, which must be first laid down; every house, however grand, a foundation.

These earlier chapters are to my story what the keel is to a ship; the foundation to a house.

CHAPTER III.

ON BOARD THE "FAIRY."—OVERBOARD.

SUPPER at the *Haven of Rest* is a very different thing from anything I had seen or heard of before.

There were tea and coffee, salt beef, some hashed fowl, and a dish called scous, of the composition of which I had not the least idea, but ventured to try, which I did, and liked it much.

There was no soft bread—only biscuits and butter; but these I enjoyed quite as well, or better, for a change.

Polly laid the table, and then seated herself with us. The old man, Ben, had his evening meal forward, with his wife, the steward.

"Well, my lad, what d'ye think of this ship, eh? 'Taint so bad as a workhouse or a prison, is it?"

"No, indeed! Captain," I said, "I think I shall like it very much."

"Ah! well—hope you will—get your sea legs on soon, no doubt. To-morrow I'll take you down and show you the prettiest sight in nature, on a small scale—a real ship on real water, my lad!—not in dry dock, like this craft; and a smart ship, too, though a little one, and rather crank. You can swim, I hope?"

"No, Captain Copp."

"Bad, bad! you must learn. I'll give you a lesson to-morrow."

After supper we went on deck, that is to say, I and my uncle, and the girl joined us as soon as she had cleared the table.

The old sailor lit his pipe, and with eyes half closed, commenced one of those yarns in which Polly so delighted. Just as he had finished, the bell forward struck eight times.

"Halloa! eight bells," he cried. "Set the anchor watch, Mr. Beam," he shouted.

"Sir!" cried the old man.

"I'll take the first watch from four bells—you take the second till eight bells, and the middle watch as usual."

"Ay, ay, sir," replied Mr. Ben Beam—mate and boatswain all in one,—as if the Captain had given fresh orders; whereas the fact was that the same arrangement had gone on for years. The old Captain, however, always insisted on going through the form of setting the anchor watch.

Presently I took an opportunity to ask Polly for an explanation of this.

"What's the anchor watch for, Polly?"

"Oh! it's usual on board ship at anchor; you see, when a ship is at sea, there is watch and watch; at anchor it is different."

"But what's the use of anchor watch?" I persisted. "Nothing can happen to the ship."

"Captain Copp caught some boys stealing the fruit in the garden the other day," she said; "so it was of some use then, for they have never been seen since."

"Well, tell me how it is all settled to-night, and every night."

"Captain Copp takes the watch from eight bells—that's eight o'clock in the evening—till four bells—that's ten o'clock. The boatswain, that's Ben, then goes on till midnight."

"Well, and after midnight, who takes the watch then, you or the steward—Mr. Beam's wife, I mean?"

"Oh, no! we're idlers, and sleep in all night."

"Idlers!"

"Yes; that means such people on board ship as work all day and sleep all night; like the carpenter, cook, steward, cabin-boys, and so on."

"Who does keep the watch, then?"

"Oh! there's a boy comes; he has his supper and his breakfast, and sixpence a day. He's half silly, you know," and she tapped her forehead. "I don't like him at all, but Captain Copp says he's quite harmless. He's not one of the crew, you know, and hasn't signed articles like we have, but is what they call a supernumerary."

The more I heard from this remarkable child, the more the extent of her knowledge on all matters connected with the sea astonished me.

"Well," she went on, "he keeps watch from twelve o'clock till four; at least he's supposed to do, though I believe he sleeps most of the time. Then at four o'clock he lights the galley fire and calls the Captain, and then, whilst he's getting up, he sweeps up the deck. When the Captain comes up, they wash down the decks with water pumped from the tank. Washing down decks is done every morning at sea, winter and summer, except in a storm. Well, at six o'clock the steward has hot coffee ready, and everybody turns out,—that is, they're supposed to, but if I am sleepy, the Captain lets me sleep till half-past seven— isn't it kind of him? Then, at

eight, we have breakfast, and after breakfast I go to school; come home to dinner at one, and then go to school again till three; then I come on board again for the day, and am a cabin-boy. I can tell you, I like being a cabin-boy ever so much better than being at school. Good night; I'm going to wash up the things, put the cabin tidy, and then I shall turn into my bunk."

With a smile and a nod she vanished down the companion way, and I was left alone on the quarter-deck of the ship, for my uncle was in the fore-castle, busy with something or other.

It did not require much effort of imagination to suppose that I was really at sea, considering the surroundings, and the amount of sea talk I had listened to.

I gave myself up to a fanciful reverie, and pictured myself as really an officer of a merchantman, far out on the bosom of the blue ocean keeping my watch. I marched up and down the quarter-deck, as I fancied, in true nautical style, and had been thus occupied all the while, building castles in the air, when my uncle's voice roused me from my reverie.

"Halloa, my lad! hadn't you better turn in? You've got no anchor watch to keep."

Be it observed, the old man was not always quite consistent, even in his nautical fancies, for sometimes he addressed me as Mr. Holt, at others as Tom, and again as "my lad."

"I was just thinking, uncle," I said, determined to humour his whim, "that I might as well keep anchor watch as you and Mr. Beam."

"No, no, Tom; we've got enough of a crew for that. You'll have nothing to do for three months but look about you—get used to things, and see how you like it; by then you'll have had time to turn over in your head what you think of for the future, for I want to see you get on in the world, Tom, for your mother's sake."

"You're very kind, uncle, but I don't like to be idle; you know I've signed articles, and am one of the crew."

"Yes, yes, lad; that's all very well, but the ship's in port now, you see, and, as is often the rule, the second

mate don't stay by her. You're on a visit to me now, Tom. For three months you don't do any regular work on board this barque, or my name ain't John Copp. You needn't be idle, though; you can attend to your schooling, and learn to swim, and then what you pick up of seafaring matters may be of use to you, whatever line of life you choose. Who can tell? Never despise knowledge, of whatever kind, my lad. Pick up all you can, and trust to fortune for its coming in handy some of these days. Away you go, and turn into your bunk. Polly, that's to say the cabin-boy, ain't gone to bed yet; I can hear her rattling the crockery about in the pantry; she'll show you your bunk—it's on the starboard side. Good night!"

"Good night, uncle," I said, and went to bed.

My berth was in a little cabin, with a large port-hole looking out towards the river, between which and the *Haven of Rest* was a small orchard of apple and plum trees.

The port-hole was big enough for me to have crawled through and dropped to the ground, had I chosen.

I contented myself with drawing the curtain, and as I lay in my bunk, gazing out on the moonlight scene.

Before long the green trees and grass seemed to become sea; I fancied I felt the vessel heave up and down with the swell, and then I was asleep.

In the morning I was awakened by a clear pleasant childish voice, as Polly pushed the sliding door of my little cabin bedroom on one side, and put her pretty face in,—

"Seven bells, there—turn out, you sleepers."

Out I jumped, and finishing washing and dressing, was on deck before breakfast was on the table.

That day I spent in cruising about with a roving commission, as my uncle expressed it, and making myself at home in the vessel and the neighbourhood.

This I varied by getting hold of Polly as often as possible, and listening, with amused wonder, to her childish prattle, which, though so singular, had much intelligence and shrewdness.

The day passed pleasantly enough, and so did the next, and the next, till a week had elapsed since I first came to the *Haven of Rest*.

Looking back on the past, I can safely say that those days were the happiest of my life. No care; no trouble; no wrong; no dangers to confront; no hardships to endure.

Alas! how different is my lot as I pen this—the first part of my narrative.

Alone on the boundless ocean!

Shall I ever see those dear faces—that happy scene again?

Will my uncle's gruff manly, good-humoured voice ever fall on my ear? Shall I again ever listen to Polly's charming and sagacious gossip?

Who knows? Who can tell?—Some One who rules on high.

But I am anticipating.

The reader will pardon me for dwelling on this early portion of my life. It is but natural I should do so.

Does not one quit pleasant fields, sprinkled with flowers and with sunny skies overhead, to wander amidst a rocky and desolate desert with regret and lingering?

I learned to swim, and when I was able to reach the other side of the river unaided, Captain Copp declared that I could swim well enough to form one of the crew of the *Fairy* on her next excursion.

I can scarcely say with what delight I looked forward to this. The description Polly had given of the delights of a sail in the miniature ship had not been forgotten; and when, after having been duly instructed in the duties I had to perform, we set out together for the little wooden pier which had been built into the river especially for landing and embarking from the *Fairy*, my heart leapt high with excitement.

It was a lovely day towards the end of the summer; a pleasant breeze rustling among the leaves, giving promise of a good sail.

Captain Copp embarked first, and took his seat with due solemnity at the tiller.

"Now, Mr. Holt," he said, "jump on board and sta-

tion yourself in the waist, at the fore and main braces. You, boy, keep in the waist too, and help haul in the tacks and sheets when the vessel is put about. As for you, Mr. Beam, you will be on the forecastle, and see to the head sails, as usual. Are you all ready?" he asked, as we took our seats according to his directions.

"All right, sir," said the mate from the fore part of the vessel.

"Sheet home and hoist the foretopsail, and run up the jib."

The sails were already loosed, so, while Polly pulled on the jib halliards, I and old Beam sheeted home and hoisted the topsail.

"Cast off the hawser," shouted Captain Copp.

The said hawser was a small rope about as thick as my finger, which held her head to the little wooden jetty.

However, this having been let go, her bows swung round into the stream, under pressure of the wind on the foretopsail and jib.

There was a moderate breeze blowing across, and a little up the stream, so that the vessel could barely lay her course down with full sails.

Indeed, it became apparent that we should have to tack, for there was a point of land about a quarter of a mile down, which she could not possibly weather.

However, this did not matter much, for, as Polly sagely explained to me in sailor phrase, we could make a "short leg and a long one,"—which meant that we could sail on our proper course, or nearly so, for a quarter of a mile, then make a short tack of fifty yards or so, in order to clear the point, and then make another stretch of a like length or longer.

So soon as we were clear of the land, Polly and I hastened to set the maintopsail and maintop-gallant-sail, while Ben—or Mr. Beam, as I ought to call him—did the same by the sails of the foremast.

Captain Copp himself set the spanker and gaff topsail (she was barque-rigged), and in five minutes we were cutting through the water at a fine rate.

"Isn't it nice?" said Polly.

"It's glorious! it's grand!" I replied. And so indeed it appeared to me.

The little ship heeled over to the breeze till her lee gunwale was within a few inches of the water, through which she glided swiftly and smoothly, with an almost imperceptible motion. Indeed, but for the rushing noise at her bows as she clove her way, and that streak of foam and bubbles on either side, I might have fancied she never moved at all.

So rapidly and yet so swiftly did she glide along, that we were quite close to the point of land in a minute or so after we had set sail.

"Ready about!" said Captain Copp, in his gruff voice; and instantly all of us were at our proper stations.

Polly was prepared to let go the fore and main tack and sheets, while I kept my hand on the main and maintopsail traces, in order to swing the yards round at the word of command.

I had thoroughly rehearsed this nautical manœuvre with the little girl, who took compassion on my ignorance and showed me, on board the *Haven of Rest*, the necessary ropes to be pulled, and all about it. My uncle, too, gave me some brief instructions as to what to do before we came on board; but I profited much more by what Polly told me; she was so patient in explaining, and did so at the same time with an air of such pity for my ignorance, that I felt at once grateful and astounded.

"Helm a-lee!" was the next thing, and as the Captain put the tiller hard over, the *Fairy* shot up into the wind, but not until she was so close to the land that I could have touched it with my boathook.

"Loose tacks and sheets!" was the next order; and Polly's nimble and practised hand soon executed it, and the canvas was instantly flapping and threshing in the wind.

Then came—

"Mainsail haul!"

I gave myself to the task with a will, and soon swung round the tight yards, and braced them sharp to the wind, and had the ropes belayed in time to assist in

hauling round the fore-yards and sheeting home the two jibs.

"Let go, and haul!"

And round came the fore-yards altogether.

The vessel was now on the other tack, and wearing directly for the opposite shore; so of necessity this must be only a very short tack. Bravely had she gathered full way, and began to cleave the water as before, when the Captain's voice again called us to our posts.

"Ready about!"

This was followed quickly by "tacks and sheets;" and the *Fairy's* head came round to the wind much quicker than before.

Perhaps it was this, and knowing that the manœuvre must be executed with greater dispatch than before, that caused me to be flurried.

"Mainsail haul!" the Captain shouted, and forthwith I tugged on the starboard braces with all my strength.

"Now then, with that mainyard!" shouted Captain Copp; "why the devil don't you haul it round; quick, or she'll miss stays."

"Ay, ay, sir," I shouted, tugging away more desperately than ever at the ropes, but with no effect.

"Why, you d——d (that means dashed, you know) lubber in the waist there, you've got the starboard braces belayed! How do you expect to be able to haul the yards round? Let them go—bear a hand."

"Ay, ay, sir," I replied, as I stumbled to the mast and proceeded to let go what I thought were the braces in question.

A sharp cry caused me to look round to Polly, and to my horror I saw her feet caught in a coil of rope, which was rapidly running aloft. In another second she was overboard.

My uncle did not for the moment see what had happened, as the mainsail hid her from him.

"Why, you confounded lubber there in the waist, you've let go the topsail halliards," he shouted. "The ship'll be ashore! Round with the yards, quick—fore-castle there, flatten in the jib sheets—stand by to let go the anchor!"

It was too late. I had indeed let go the topsail halliards by mistake, and, as it happened, unfortunately, that Polly was standing within the coil of rope, her feet were caught and she was thrown overboard.

The yard, though only a very small one, was quite heavy enough to effect this. Since that time I have seen a man killed who happened to be standing within the coil of the topsail halliards when the rope was accidentally let go.

I have said that the loud shouts of Captain Copp quite drowned the feeble cries of the girl. For a moment or two I was so stunned and astonished as to be unable to do anything. But I quickly recovered myself, and, rushing to the other side, causing the boat to sway dangerously as I did so, shouted,—

"Luff—luff! Polly's overboard!"

The ship had now gathered sternway, and was fast being drifted by the wind to the shore.

I saw Polly struggling in the river about ten yards away, beating the water with her hands, and crying out faintly.

Each moment the boat drifted farther away from her.

"Ship the oars, Ben!" shouted Captain Copp. "Ship the oars and row like blazes! Dash my eyes! the girl will be drowned before our faces! Bear a hand there—bear a hand!"

Ben was an old man, and though, perhaps, years ago he might have been cool and self-possessed in moments of danger, he was now nervous and flurried, more so than I myself was; and in his hurry he lost one of the oars overboard as he was shipping them.

Here was a fresh and terrible disaster. It was impossible to row the vessel back to her assistance with one oar only against the wind.

"Ben! Ben!" shouted Captain Copp, "you used to be a good swimmer; jump overboard and save her. God help me! I cannot swim a stroke now with this timber leg."

Ben, though old and full in body, had the pluck of a true British sailor, and at once leapt overboard. But alas! the poor weak body was unequal to the task. He

found himself quite unable to keep himself afloat even, and but for catching hold of the gunwale of the craft would have sunk.

Then I threw off my jacket and cap and prepared to leap into the water. I could swim only a very little with my clothes off; how I should fare encumbered with them it was impossible to say.

However, there was not a moment to lose, if the poor little girl was to be saved.

Before plunging into the water a happy thought struck me—one of those thoughts that really seem as if they come by inspiration.

I seized the remaining oar and threw it end in, with all my strength, in the direction of the drowning girl.

Then I leapt overboard, head foremost, as my uncle had taught me to do.

When I came to the surface I could not see anything, as the water blinded my eyes; but I struck out, guessing roughly at the direction I thought she must be in.

"Good lad!—good lad!" I heard my uncle shout; "more to the right!—more to the right! Strike out like a man, and you'll be in time yet! Strike out, my lad—strike—swim for life! She's sinking!—she's sinking!"

Thus encouraged, I exerted myself to the utmost, and struggled on through the water towards Polly, whose whereabouts I could now make out.

I found my clothes a terrible incumbrance, and it was with the greatest difficulty I could keep myself afloat.

Still, encouraged by the cheering words of Captain Copp, which rang in my ears like the sound of a trumpet, I made way, although I more than once swallowed a mouthful of water. When I reached the drowning girl I was all but exhausted, and to a looker-on it might well have seemed a case of the blind leading the blind. Her clothes, while they served in part to support her, were in my way, and there was imminent danger of my attempt to save her resulting in the drowning of us both.

Polly clung to me with more desperation than prudence, and though I struggled frantically again and again, my head went below the surface, and I was half choked with gulps of water.

I was almost exhausted by the great exertions I had made, and from the same cause was compelled to breathe quickly; hence I could not hold my breath for more than a second, and as time after time I involuntarily inhaled water, I experienced a feeling of weight on the chest, and intense pain in the head.

I could now no longer hear the encouraging shouts of my uncle from the boat, for noises like distant thunder rang in my ears; my eyes felt as though they were starting from my head, and terrible oppression weighed on my brain. As I rose above the surface, Polly still clinging to me, each time I struggled to free my arms, and at last got one at liberty. But this, which might have barely served to support me, was quite inadequate to keep both of us afloat. I now thought that my time had come, though I still struggled on spasmodically with arms and legs. Polly had ceased to move, but hung to me still with a close death-like embrace.

Those only who have been in such a position can imagine the terrible nature of my feelings, bodily and mental.

I had no crimes with which to reproach myself, but yet a strange dread of what was coming when this brief and painful struggle should be over oppressed me. By degrees, the blindness caused by the water, and the stoppage of the circulation of the blood, gave place to a sort of inner sight, and it was no longer dark.

I still, however, retained my consciousness; was perfectly well aware of my situation, and struggled as hard as I could, for the pain in the head and the feelings of suffocation on the chest were terrible.

I was conscious, too, when we rose to the surface, though I could not see.

Weaker and weaker grew my efforts, feebler and feebler the flame of life; and just as I was passing into a dream-like state, my hand struck some hard substance.

I had strength enough and sense enough left to grasp hold of this with one hand, and was able thereby to raise my head above water and take a gasping breath or two. I soon found that it was the oar I had thrown which had thus opportunely presented itself to me. Polly was now

quite insensible, and soon I was able to free her arms from around me, so that I could more conveniently keep us both afloat.

By degrees, and with many pants and gasps, I recovered my breath, got the water from my nostrils and throat, and was able to see dimly.

Fortunately, the oar was a large one, and of light wood, and served admirably as a support; so in a short time, still supporting Polly, I was enabled to make my way, painfully and slowly (as I was but an indifferent swimmer), towards the boat, to which I was guided by the voice of Captain Copp, shouting in stentorian tones, in order to encourage me. Ere long I got within reach, and seizing hold of a rope old Ben threw me, I was hauled alongside with my insensible burden, myself in little better plight.

"Hip! hip! hooray!" shouted my uncle, standing up and waving his hat frantically—"Saved from the bosom of the briny deep!—The Lord be praised!—enter it in the log!"

Since, I have often smiled at this strange and incongruous speech, welcoming me back on board; at that time, however, it passed unheeded, and, utterly exhausted, I lay side by side with Polly at the bottom of the boat.

"Cap'n," said Ben, after looking at the pale blue face of Polly, "I'm afeared the gal's gone aloft."

"Don't say that, lad—don't say that," said the old man, in tremulous accents, as he blundered forward; "the Lord's been pleased to save 'em from the briny deep, and He don't care to do things by halves, I know,"—my uncle's piety, though sincere, was peculiar in its nature.

The little vessel had now drifted ashore, and a landing was quickly effected. Captain Copp and old Ben lifted Polly out. As for me, I was sufficiently recovered to walk, though still feeble and trembling.

For the first time the trim little craft was neglected—no one taking the trouble even to fasten her up; and an immediate start was made for the nearest house, fortunately only a few hundred yards away.

It was a singular procession, and but for the danger of the poor girl, might well have excited laughter.

First there was the bronzed weather-beaten old Captain, bareheaded, his face full of anxiety, stumping along, carrying Polly's head and shoulders.

Then came old Ben—looking like a half-drowned rat—bearing her feet.

And lastly, myself, shivering with cold—my hands hanging helplessly by my side, a good imitation of a criminal going to be hanged who had first had a ducking.

In this order we reached a farmhouse, where, of course, we were hospitably received, and every effort made for the recovery of the insensible girl.

The women folk took her under their charge—stripped her, dried her, and wrapped her in warm blankets before the fire.

As for Ben and myself, we also were seated before another fire, and supplied with dry clothes and hot brandy-and-water, *ad libitum*.

Captain Copp was with us, and every five minutes, gulping down a glass of scalding spirits, he would go to the door of the inner room to inquire about Polly.

Then he would come back again, and trying to take it for granted that she was not dead, would thank Providence for having spared her.

On which latter point, however, he could not satisfy himself, for down went the fresh glass of spirits, in less than five minutes, and away stumped the old man to learn whether she had yet shown signs of life.

He had to make so many of these journeys that, had not the spirit-bottle given out, I verily believe the old man would have got as drunk as a fiddler.

However, in about five minutes there came the welcome news from the other room, "She's coming round."

"Hooray!" shouted the Captain, with a strange mixture of pious devotion and seafaring habit. "Splice the main brace! Missis, some more grog!"

The worthy hostess having complied, Captain Copp mixed five stiff glasses, one for each of us, one for her, and one for the invalid.

On the worthy woman protesting that the strong brandy-and-water might do the girl harm instead of good, he cried vehemently,—

“Nonsense—she’s a sailor, and who ever heard of a cat being hurt by milk or a sailor by grog!”

“A sailor!” exclaimed the missis, in astonishment.

“Ay! and one of the crew of my ship—down on the articles and in the log—so that’s settled. It’s splice the main brace, and no mistake!”

All this, which did not cause even a smile to myself and Ben, was Greek to the worthy woman.

However, she took the brandy-and-water in to the girl, who was now recovering slowly, thinking to herself what a strange old gentleman her guest was.

“The Lord be praised for this, lads!” he said; “if anything had happened to that gal—my cabin-boy, I mean,” he added, correcting himself—“I should never have been happy again. I should have been miserable in this life, and ashamed to go to heaven in the next, even if I was down on the books; for the first I should meet there would be her father, and he would say to me, ‘John Copp, where’s my child?’ I’d ha’ blown up the boat and sunk the *Haven of Rest*—if I wouldn’t, splinter me!”

With this the Captain tossed off his glass, leaving me to wonder how he would bring about the sinking of our ship, as she was firmly planted on solid land.

At this moment the hostess came in, and, finger to her lips, full of mystery and caution, as is always the case with women under the circumstances, announced that the patient had opened her eyes and was coming to beautiful.

It was with great difficulty that my uncle could be dissuaded from splicing the main brace once more, to celebrate the joyful event.

This, however, having been dispensed with, we were admitted to the room where Polly lay. She was lying

on a sofa before the fire, wrapped in a flannel dressing-gown, and looking very different from when we brought her in an hour or so back.

The deadly bluish tint observable in those who perish by drowning had vanished, and though she was still pale, the colour of her complexion was healthy. Her hair had been dried, combed, and carefully arranged by her kind attendants; and as the little girl thus lay, with closed eyes, breathing shortly and regularly, apparently in a deep sleep, she presented a very pretty sight.

"Bless his young eyes!" ejaculated Captain Copp, in a voice as though afraid to awake her; "as good a lad and smart a cabin-boy as ever sailed under me!"

Now that he had got over the fear of her not recovering, habit again asserted itself, and he spoke of her and thought of her as the cabin-boy. At this moment the good woman of the house called his attention to Polly.

"Hush! she's going to speak!"

The little girl opened her eyes and gazed vacantly around; then, raising herself on her elbow, she looked up in astonishment, and, falling back, closed her eyes as she cried,—

"Mainsail haul! Round with the yards! Forecastle there, flatten in the jib-sheets. Stand by to let go—let go the anchor!"

Her mind was wandering, and these, her first words, were the last orders of Captain Copp.

Often did we laugh at her since that, and teased her on the subject. She would, however, triumphantly reply,—

"At all events, I'm not such a lubber as to let go the topsail halliards for the main braces!"—which was a fair and deserved hit at me.

CHAPTER IV.

SIMPLE SIMON.

NONE of us experienced any evil effects from this adventure, which threatened to be so disastrous, except Polly, who suffered for nine days from a slight cold.

My uncle did not scold or reproach me for my clumsiness, the cause of the accident, but contented himself with saying, "Might have been a bad job—better luck next time—put it in the log."

Which latter he faithfully did, and there it stands now, doubtless, a record of my stupidity.

Polly, however, was not so forbearing.

When we met next morning (the Captain insisted on her turning into her bunk so soon as we got back to the *Haven*) she accosted me, saying, with a contemptuous toss of the head,—

"Don't you think you're a very stupid fellow to let go the topsail halliards instead of the main braces? you ought to know better—I'm ashamed of you."

And to tell the honest truth, I felt thoroughly ashamed of myself, albeit I had done my best to retrieve my error by plunging into the water, and, at the risk of my own life, saving Polly.

I must say it struck me that the young lady evinced scanty gratitude for the great effort I had made to rescue her, and I felt not a little annoyed thereat.

However, I endeavoured to dismiss the feeling from my mind, and things went on much as usual.

One day, however, there occurred an incident which quite reinstated me in the good opinion of this little damsel.

And here I may remark that the charge of ingratitude I mentally brought against Polly was undeserved, for she really did not know clearly in what manner she had been rescued from drowning.

She saw, when she came to her senses, that both I and Ben Beam were wet, and supposed that we had

been both equally concerned in getting her out of the water, on which she thought no more about the matter.

Captain Copp was a man of few words, except when he spun a yarn, and said nothing whatever on the subject.

I, on my part, did not choose to relate my own narrow escape from drowning in saving her, lest it might look like boasting.

I have before mentioned a boy from the village who used to come on board to keep watch at night, help wash down the decks in the morning, and do the dirty work, such as sweeping and scraping.

I believe my uncle employed him purely out of charity; his mother and father could do nothing with him; he was the terror of their lives, refusing to work, robbing them, and beating his brothers and sisters. If not exactly an idiot, he was certainly half witted, and had all the cunning and malevolence of those so afflicted.

Of my uncle he stood in wholesome dread; since the Captain had administered to him a hearty rope's-ending, afterwards putting him in irons and keeping him on bread and water for three days, with the full consent of his parents.

When Master Simon—that was his name—was liberated, he was very humble and crestfallen indeed, and did not attempt to repeat the offence.

This was some months before I arrived at the *Haven of Rest*, but Polly told me all about it.

CHAPTER V

I DEFEND POLLY.—FAREWELL TO THE "HAVEN OF REST."

WELL, one fine autumn night Polly was up late at work in the pantry, finishing something which should have been done during the day, but had been postponed—the girl cabin-boy having taken a whole holiday to go to the village feast—cleaning the spoons and forks, I think it was, but however, that doesn't matter; as I

was saying, one fine night I was awakened by hearing an altercation at some little distance from the vessel; thoroughly awakened, so that there was no chance of my dropping off to sleep again. So I rose, and hastily slipping on my trousers, went on deck.

The sound of voices attracted my attention to a place in the orchard where grew several richly bearing plum trees.

"I tell you you shan't! the Captain has forbidden it."

"Get out of the way, I shall!"

The latter voice was that of Simon, the half idiot; the other that of Polly.

"Give it to me," I heard the little girl say, "I will have it."

Then there broke a savage sound, half yell, from Simon, and the next moment a loud scream told me that he had struck her or injured her in some manner.

To run down the ladder and on the green turf, bare-foot as I was, did not occupy many seconds, and I quickly arrived on the scene.

Polly held a small branch, on which were several ripe plums, which Simon was violently endeavouring to wrest from her. He held one of her wrists tightly with his right hand, and was snatching at the branch with the other. But Polly held it behind and above her, and he could not reach it. This roused him to fury, and just as I got close he struck her, a blow on the forehead with his clenched fist, which knocked her down. Then, with a howl like that of a wild beast, he threw himself on her and wrested the branch from her hand.

Burning with rage, I hesitated not an instant, but sprang upon him, hitting him right and left in the face. He was older, stronger, and heavier than I was, but I possessed much greater agility and prowess, and as we rolled over and over on the turf I avoided all his efforts to seize me by the throat, and continued to strike him several more times with my fists in the face, which was now streaming with blood. Still his superior weight and strength gave him great advantage in a wrestling match, and I wished to put an end to this style of combat as quickly as I could. I seized the first oppor-

tunity to free myself from his arms, and scrambled to my feet.

I now considered myself on better terms with him, and the event proved that I was right; for, though not very strong, I was wiry and active, and quickly rained such a succession of blows on his face as he rushed at me as to stupefy and frighten him.

In five minutes he was at my mercy, and completing my victory, I threw him down and there held him, calling to Polly to get some rope to tie his hands.

The little girl, however, did better than that, for running fleetly as a young deer to the ship, she returned as quickly with a pair of handcuffs and the key.

"Here are the irons," she said; "put them on all night; we will keep him prisoner and take him before the Captain in the morning."

This was a capital idea, and I quickly acted upon it. In half a minute Mr. Simon found himself with the handcuffs on his wrists, and we forced him to march before us on board the vessel.

We next proceeded to secure him to the mainmast by means of a rope, and then left him to his thoughts.

Said Polly, when we were alone together on the quarter-deck, taking my hand in hers,—

"Tom, you are a brave fellow; I always liked you a little—now I love you!"

Years have passed over since that innocent expression came from the innocent heart of my little shipmate; but never have I forgotten them,—never shall I forget them.

Methinks, as I pen this record, I can even now hear the soft low music of her voice.

But to resume.

I kept the remainder of the watch, while Polly, having finished in the pantry, turned into her berth.

In the morning, the moment the Captain came on deck, I went and called Polly. She was up and dressed in ten minutes, and joined me at the mainmast, where we had fastened Simon up.

Unfastening him, we made him march before us on to the quarter-deck, and halting him opposite my uncle,

I touched my cap and drew his attention with these concise words,—

“Prisoner, Captain.”

“Prisoner, eh!” exclaimed the old man. “What’s he done?”

Hereupon I proceeded to tell him, and when I came to his striking Polly, I pointed to a bump on her forehead where he had hit her.

“You d——d scoundrel!” shouted Captain Copp, as he seized the culprit. “I’ll teach you mutiny! Tom, give me hold of a rope’s end.”

I did so, and then Captain Copp proceeded to thrash the delinquent till he howled from pain, and Polly interceded to spare him further punishment.

Handcuffs and bread and water were, however, master Simon’s fate for a week after this affair.

He never forgave nor forgot my share in his punishment, but that I did not mind, for Polly also treasured it up in her heart, and henceforth we were staunch friends.

Affairs now went on in a quiet humdrum but happy manner, no event worth chronicling occurring all the time I remained at the *Haven of Rest*.

Six months rolled on, and I had become so habituated to the singular yet happy and peaceful life I led, that to have lived in a regular home would have seemed quite strange and uncomfortable.

At the end of that period my uncle called me before him, and formally asked what profession, trade, or calling I wished to follow.

Without a moment’s hesitation, I replied,—

“I will go to sea.”

“Mind you, my lad, it’s a hard life and a rough life; very different from that you’ve been leading here.”

“Yes, uncle, I know that, and don’t fear it. I’ve made up my mind and shall go to sea; that is, if it’s not against your wish.”

I saw a gleam in the old man’s eyes, which convinced me that there was no fear of opposition on his part; that indeed he felt pleased and proud that I had deter-

mined to adopt the profession which he had loved so well.

"So be it, my lad," he said; "I'll look out for a ship for you under a skipper I can depend on. It isn't often a year passes without some old shipmate of mine turning up at the port of Bristol. All you've got to do is just to get up your seamanship and navigation, and grow strong. I do believe there's the makings of a sailor in the lad, eh, Polly?"

That young lady answered, rather disparagingly,—

"Well, Captain, he's very stupid; but I think he may do."

The cool audacity of this from the little minx so flabbergasted me that I could not say a word.

Captain Copp decided that after six months' training on board the *Haven of Rest* I might go to sea, shipping on my first voyage as ordinary seaman, although I had never in my life seen anything approaching nearer to salt water than the Bristol Channel.

Norie's "Epitome of Navigation" and an old quadrant were put into my hands, and I was bid to study the former and practise with the latter. I was always quick at figures, and was very soon able to calculate courses and distances, latitude and longitude, by trigonometry and the logarithm tables, though I must confess I was not well grounded in the science. As to seamanship, the old man himself took me in hand, and after my determination to go to sea, the *Haven of Rest* was put through a thorough course of repair, as regarded her rigging, masts, and sails.

In the first place, the standing rigging was all set up and the ends neatly turned in. Then she was rattled down afresh; that is to say, fresh ratlines were stretched from shroud to shroud, fore and aft.

Old Ben and I, under his inspection, did all this; and then there came the important operation of sending up topmasts and topgallant-masts and reeving the running rigging.

This occupied a week, and I found it rather tedious; but the good it did me in learning my profession was incalculable.

After having had considerable practice in sending up yards and masts, reeving running rigging, and putting on chafing gear, I next commenced to learn, under Ben Beam, how to make knots and splices, in which I soon became proficient.

In a month I could make a long and short splice, double and single wall-knots, Turk's heads, double diamonds, spritsail sheet-knots, bow-lines and bow-line on a bight, rolling hit, Blackwall hitch, timber-hitch, carrick-bend, cats' paw, clove hitch, sheepshank, and many other knots, bends, and splices in which seamen delight.

In the evening I studied my Norie's "Epitome," and gradually acquired the rudiments of navigation.

Now I began to get the upper hand of little Polly, who was no longer able to treat me with contemptuous pity, as my knowledge of seamanship now exceeded hers; and as for navigation, there I had her quite out of her depth.

All this while I was increasing in strength and stature, and my constitution was becoming hardened, my bones set by healthy labour and a regular life.

At last the long-wished-for time arrived when I should go on board a real ship, and set sail over the bosom of the great ocean to a foreign port.

An old friend and shipmate of my uncle's, one Captain Musgrave, arrived in Bristol with his vessel, and did not fail to pay a visit to Captain Copp at the *Haven of Rest*.

The old sailor at once introduced the subject.

"See here, Musgrave," he said, "I've got a lad here wants to go to sea—my sister's son—a strong, honest-hearted lad—been under my own eye this last twelve-month. Will you take him?"

The answer was prompt and decisive.

"Ay, that I will, old chum. Send him on board this day week."

And so it was settled that I was to go to sea, shipping on board the barque *Esmeralda*, bound for Canterbury in New Zealand. In consideration of the training I had received and the recommendation of Captain Copp,

I was to be rated as an ordinary seaman—a high honour, considering I had never been on board a real vessel.

I at once took a liking to my captain that was to be, although my uncle told me he was a regular Tartar when put out. I gathered this much in his keen eye and the look of stern resolution in his face, but as I intended to do my duty honestly, it had no terrors for me.

The week between this interview and the sailing of the ship was spent in busy preparation for my outfit. Captain Copp himself took me into Bristol, and there purchased such articles as he considered necessary. Chief among these was a hammock, bedding, and chest, sea boots, and a suit of oil clothes; a pair of shoes, half-a-dozen pairs of canvas trousers, two or three duck jumpers, a few blue shirts and flannels, a quadrant, a bar of soap, hook tin pot, pannikin, tin plate, and knife and fork, completed my outfit, as far as my uncle was concerned.

Polly, however, was by no means satisfied that I should go thus scantily provided for, although Captain Copp declared that what he had selected was an abundance and to spare. The little girl, who was as quick as a fairy at her needle, forthwith set to work and made me a lot of articles of linen and fine flannel, which my uncle declared were quite superfluous.

At the end of the week I found my chest nearly full, and, as I turned over my possessions, wondered how ever Polly could have thought of all the little odds and ends she had stored up for me.

At the top of all were a few books—a Bible, Norie's "Epitome of Navigation," a Seaman's Manual, Nautical Almanack, a small chart of the world, a case of mathematical instruments, quadrant, pens, ink, and paper; and last of all, and for the purposes of this story most important, log-book and journal.

At last the eventful day arrived on which I was to take leave of the *Haven of Rest* and go forth on the world to seek my fortune.

There was a carrier's cart running between the village where was situated the *Haven of Rest* and Bristol, and by this conveyance I took my departure on the after-

noon of the day preceding that on which the ship was to sail. The old skipper ordered the boatswain to "pipe all hands," and then delivered himself of a speech on the occasion.

This having been brought to a conclusion, old Ben shouldered my sea-chest, while I, walking between Captain Copp and Polly, followed, carrying the hammock. I got into the cart, and the last thing I remember, after the farewell grip of my uncle's horny hand, was Polly placing a little purse of her own making in my hand.

Then there was a ringing cheer by all hands, amidst which I could distinguish the hoarse tones of my uncle's voice, the gruff note of Old Ben, and the shrill treble of Polly.

I leaned back in the cart, and as the sounds died away in the distance and the *Haven of Rest* faded from my dimmed vision, my cheeks were wet with tears.

It was my own choice, and yet I felt inexpressibly sad at leaving this quiet abode, where I had spent such happy hours, and which was endeared to me by so many fond associations. From this time forth my life has been of a very different sort. Those calm tranquil days have fled for ever, and, as if by magic, I find myself thrown amongst stirring scenes and exciting adventure, the sport of fortune, a waif on the ocean.

What will be the result? As I now write I shudder to contemplate what may be my fate; and yet, in spite of all, the flame of hope burns brightly in my breast.

Nil desperandum!

Such shall be my motto.

CHAPTER VI.

I FALL INTO BAD COMPANY.

BEHOLD me on the wharf in Bristol ancient town, gazing at the shipping and amusing myself by distinguishing barques, brigs, schooners, full-rigged ships, &c., and guessing at their tonnage; for already, thanks to

my strange life at the *Haven of Rest*, I knew as much, ay, more, about a ship than many a youngster who has been a voyage round the world.

I was not a little vain of my knowledge, and, though I had never even seen the sea, strutted up and down, and thought myself a regular sailor.

I was dressed pilot cloth jacket and trousers, check shirt, blue cap, and black neck-tie, and was by no means a bad-looking young fellow—at least, so my uncle told me ere he bade me farewell, and so, too, did Polly, not with lips, but with her eyes. I was a little bit conceited and vain, I must acknowledge, but then there were excuses for me. What young fellow with an ambition for the sea, starting on his first voyage with a tolerable knowledge of his business, with good clothes on his back, a chest containing a good outfit, and money in his pocket, would not have been so?

I was proud of my independence, and felt a man—a full-fledged sailor—already.

I had learned to smoke with my uncle's full approbation. He had done so since he was a boy, and had never found any harm from it, he said. So, long before I left the *Haven of Rest*, I was in the habit of taking my quiet pipe. This was an accomplishment in which I had the advantage over Polly. She used to tease me and triumph over me on board our ship-home, by reason of her superior knowledge of seamanship and nautical terms; but I, on the other hand, had the best of her in being able to smoke, and even at a pinch to take a quid—of both which she was utterly incapable.

But to resume.

My uncle had advised me to go on board the same night that I arrived at Bristol; but as the vessel would not sail till the next day at one o'clock, I could, if I liked, he said, remain on shore and amuse myself about the town. He was careful to caution me against getting tipsy, and to avoid "land-sharks" above all men.

Of getting tipsy I was not a bit afraid, as I did not care for liquor beyond an occasional glass of ale, and on board the *Haven* used to take my grog merely out of compliment to my uncle, who, fine old fellow, would

have been deeply mortified had I refused to take my "tot" when he ordered the steward to splice the main brace.

On the whole, proud of my independence and of the trust reposed in me, I resolved to remain on shore that night and go on board the vessel next morning. So I went to a nautical inn on the quay, engaged a bed for the night, caused my chest to be taken upstairs, and then, having had tea, went out for a stroll. I had with me nearly all my money, leaving a trifle, with the locket Polly had given me, and a few other things, in the purse she had made for me. These were all safe in my chest, and remembering my uncle's caution to me about land-sharks, and how cunning and voracious they were, I had half a mind to go back and place my money in safety.

However, I did not do so, and now wish that I had.

As I came through the bar I noticed a dissipated-looking man, who seemed a sailor by his dress.

I had not gone more than a hundred yards from the inn before I was accosted by this man, who rolled past me, hitching up his trousers in true sailor style, as I thought in my innocence.

"What cheer, my hearty!" he cried jovially, "outward bound, eh?"

"Yes," I replied, "I'm going to sea to-morrow."

"Ay," he said, "so am I outward bound, when I can get a ship—I've been ashore till I've spent all my rhino, and now am left without a shot in the locker, not enough to get a glass of rum with. You seem pretty well up; what say, shipmate, will you stand a drain to an old salt?"

I had always heard that sailors were generous free-hearted fellows, and considered it my bounden duty to keep up the character, so I replied, "Oh, yes, shipmate, I'll stand."

"Come in here then," he said, and I following him, we entered the bar of a public-house facing the quay.

Here he had a glass of rum and I a glass of ale. He then became very talkative, and after telling a lot of tales about the voyages he had been, and so on, he turned the conversation on myself.

"You've been several voyages, I suppose?" he said cunningly.

"No; I've never been to sea before," I replied.

"Oh, gammon—tell that to the marines; it won't go down with an old salt. I can tell a greenhorn when I see one, and no mistake. You haven't got the cut of one."

Now I was fool enough to feel flattered by this, and showed it.

I did not attempt to contradict it any more, but resolved that since he would have it so, he might for my part.

We stayed a few minutes and then went out together, he proposing to take me to a place frequented by sailors, where there was a bowling-alley. As I had no fear of either giving way to drink or the passion for gambling, I did not require much persuading, but accompanied him.

On our way we were joined by a woman, not young, certainly not attractive, but tolerably well dressed.

"Hilloa, Sal!" he cried, "where are you bound to?"

"Where are you bound to, Sam? I've just come to look for you to tell you that tea's ready."

"All right, old gal. I'm coming presently. I've just fell in with a young chap who's been a voyage or two and is going to sea again to-morrow. We're just going round to see Simmonds, and then I'll come home to tea. Perhaps this young chap will come too. This is my sister, shipmate. I live with her when I'm ashore—a real good sort she is, I can tell you. If you'll come presently she'll be glad to see you."

I declared that I had had my tea and did not want any more. When pressed, and finding I was not disposed to yield, the man whom she called Sam proposed that we should all go together and have a glass, and then I could do as I liked about coming home to tea with them.

We went into a little bar, and Sam, as before, had rum, while his sister and I took each a glass of ale. In paying for this, unfortunately, I had to produce my wallet to get change for half-a-sovereign, as I had no

more silver. I noticed that the woman eyed it keenly, but paid little heed thereto.

"Now then, one more glass round," the woman said, "and then we'll go home to tea. I'm sure you've had enough, and so has this young fellow. Too much liquor ain't good for anybody, is it, landlord?"

"Certainly not; enough's as good as a feast," replied that worthy, who lived and fattened on the drunkenness of the sailors who came to his house.

"That's just what I've been telling this young chap, sir," she said, "advising him to have a cup of tea, and never drink too much. Ah! it's a shocking habit, it is, is drinking."

I afterwards heard that this was one of the most drunken women in Bristol. She had never said anything of the kind to me, and I was thinking so, when her brother, as he stated himself to be, called my attention away.

I drank up my glass of ale, and then followed him into the bowling-alley at the back.

There were seats for spectators at one end, and feeling an aching and heaviness in the head, I reclined on one of these, thinking that the painful sensation would soon go off.

But moment by moment I grew worse: my head swam, my vision grew indistinct, and I felt a faintness come over me. Cold perspirations broke out on my face, and I felt deadly sick. For a minute or two I struggled against the feeling, and then I remember no more.

* * * * *

When I came to myself I was lying on a miserable pallet in a dirty dingy room. My mouth was parched with thirst, and a terrible pain over the eyes caused me to groan aloud, when I lifted my head and gazed around me.

Where was I?—What had happened?—How did I come here? These were the thoughts which passed through my brain as I lay and tried to remember.

Presently I recovered in a measure and staggered to my feet.

My pilot cloth jacket and black silk neckerchief had disappeared, as also had my silver watch and purse containing my money. Green as I was, I soon realized the fact that I had been robbed; and the look of the dismal room in which I had found myself was sufficient to tell me that I was in some disreputable den or another.

I thought myself fortunate in not having been robbed of my cap and boots; and so soon as I could walk with tolerable steadiness, I made the best of my way downstairs.

In the passage leading to the street I met a squalid drunken-looking woman, and asked her where I was and how I came there.

She replied gruffly that I had been found dead drunk in the streets, and brought in by a sailor who had taken compassion on me.

I ought to think myself very lucky, she said, in not finding myself in the lock-up.

As to my coat, neckerchief, watch, and money, she said she knew nothing about them, and bade me be off about my business.

Seeing that there was no chance of getting back anything, I sallied out into the street, and made the best of my way back to the inn where I had left my chest. I remembered that, fortunately, I had three sovereigns in the till of my chest, sufficient to purchase me another jacket and pay my score; having done which I resolved at once to go on board the *Esmeralda* and say nothing about this disgraceful adventure.

Little notice was taken of me, despite my bloodshot eyes and dissipated appearance, at the inn, and having unlocked my chest and taken the three sovereigns, I hastened out to buy a jacket. A bottle of soda-water, with some brandy, revived me a little, but still I felt dreadfully ill and sick.

On reviewing the events of the previous evening, I came to the conclusion that I had been drugged and robbed by the man Sam and his so-called sister.

Of course I felt annoyed at being robbed of my watch, jacket, and money, which was in the little purse Poll had herself made for me; but I was more vexed at

my own folly at suffering myself to be gulled by those two bad characters, in spite of the oft-repeated warnings of my uncle concerning land-sharks. I resolved to say not a word about it to Captain Martin, or any one else, but to go on board the *Esmeralda* as though nothing had happened.

Accordingly, having invested a sovereign in the purchase of a new jacket, I paid my score and hired a man to take my chest and hammock down to the quay, in order to embark on board the *Esmeralda*.

Imagine my dismay on reaching the wharf and directing a boatman to put me on board the barque,—

"*Esmeralda!* Why, mate, she sailed at one o'clock to-day."

It was now five in the afternoon, and now I reaped the full reward of my folly.

Captain Martin had sailed without me at the hour appointed, and I now found myself, with one pound five shillings in my pocket, on the quay at Bristol.

What was to be done?

I paid the man and told him to put my chest down on the quay; then I seated myself thereon and took counsel mentally as to what I should do.

Go back to the *Haven of Rest* and confess my folly?

No; my pride revolted at the thought.

Get a ship on my own account?

Yes! I would do that, at all events try.

Presently I espied an old sailor leaning against a stone pillar, and dreamily gazing out at the shipping in the port. I felt sure that there could be no mistake this time, that he was a genuine sailor and not a land-shark. Him then I addressed.

"I say, mate," I said, "I'm in a bit of a fix."

"Well, my lad, what is it?" he asked good-humouredly.

"I was to have sailed in the *Esmeralda*, but I'm sorry to say I got tipsy last night, overslept myself, and now she has set sail without me."

"Got your chest and hammock all right I see," the old fellow remarked, without the least appearance of surprise.

"Yes; I've got a tidy outfit."

"Any money?"

"One pound five," I answered.

"H'm—that'll do. You want to get another ship, I suppose?"

"Yes, certainly. I don't want to stay about here, nor yet to return home again looking like a fool, as I certainly am."

"All right, my lad; take it easy. All's well that ends well. Better luck next time. Come along with me; free and easy, that's my motto. My name's Jack Slatter; I've been forty years at sea, man and boy, and free and easy has always been my motto.

"So let the world jog along as it will,
I'll be free and easy still,
Free and easy,
Free and easy,
I'll be free and easy still."

Thus singing, my new acquaintance made his way along the quay, I following, and presently stopped at a shipping office.

The business there was very soon settled.

"Want an ordinary seaman for the *Phantom*?" asked Jack, the old sailor.

"Can take one," replied the shipping-master, "and two more A. B.'s. Come to-morrow morning at eleven in the forenoon: Captain Cameron will be here. The *Phantom* sails in the evening."

"Will that suit you, youngster?" asked my acquaintance.

"Yes," I replied; "where is the vessel bound?"

"Calcutta—fine ship—1,250 tons—A 1. Skipper's a good fellow—mates tartars though, I hear; have been Black Ballers; however, I mean to stand it. I've spent all my rhino and got in debt at the boarding-house, so it's time I went on another cruise."

At the invitation of the old salt I carried my trunk to the boarding-house where he stopped, and soon found myself in the company of some twenty sailors, most of

whom were outward-bounders, that is to say, having spent all their money, were on the look-out for a ship.

Jack informed me that if I shipped the next morning I should have a month's advance, and that the current wages for ordinary seamen was two pounds ten a month. So under the circumstances I spent the silver and the greater part of my last sovereign among the sailors at the boarding-house, many of whom were to be my future shipmates on board the *Phantom*.

I took care to keep sober, however, and going to bed early, was up betimes, and after breakfast walked down with my new acquaintance to the shipping-office, where I duly signed articles as ordinary seaman on board the *Phantom*.

Resolved to make sure this time, I went on board at once, and putting my chest down the fore-castle, proceeded to write an explanatory letter to my uncle.

In this I stated that I had unfortunately missed the *Esmeralda* and been left behind, not that I was wishing to return home after all his care and kindness in getting me off. I had shipped on board the *Phantom*, bound to Calcutta, on my arrival in which port I would write again. I enclosed a note to Polly, promising to bring her home a crape shawl and a silk dress from the East Indies.

I said nothing about the way in which I got late for the *Esmeralda*, thinking that it would only annoy and worry the old man, and do no good whatever.

By the time I had finished my letter, the anchor was being hove up, and I hastened on deck to make myself useful.

The letter I gave to the pilot, he promising to post it when he went ashore.

CHAPTER VII.

AT SEA.

A WEEK'S sail took the good ship clear of land, and brought her out into the broad Atlantic, rapidly approaching the tropical zone.

The weather was fine, the wind fair, the temperature of the air pleasant, so that my seafaring experience began under favourable auspices.

The crew of the *Phantom* consisted of sixty men and officers, all told; and there were, besides, twenty cabin passengers.

Her cargo consisted of bales of cotton goods from Manchester, cutlery, iron work, and machinery from Birmingham and Sheffield, hams and preserved provisions, and cases of wine and brandy and bottled ale for the Calcutta market, two hundred tons of railway iron, and, beneath all, a hundred tons of coal.

We had also on board agricultural implements, and a steam engine, such as are used for thrashing out grain.

This latter was stored between decks, and looked like a locomotive with a large fly-wheel; indeed, at first sight, I thought it was a locomotive intended for the new Indian railway, but I was undeceived on this point by the man in charge of it, who was an engineer.

I don't know how it was, but this steam engine especially attracted my attention, and elicited my admiration. The engineer was a very willing fellow, and readily explained to me all about it, showing me the different parts of the complicated machinery, and telling me the use of each.

The ship was nearly new, consequently there was abundant work to do on the rigging—which required “setting up,” as it is called in port,—which, with putting on chafing gear, and so forth, occupied all hands the whole day.

I found the work hard, and now began to realize the difference between playing at sailors on board the *Haven of Rest*, and the reality on board a big ship.

Besides the cargo I have mentioned, there were lots of cases of general merchandise, fancy goods, jewellery, &c., in cases.

I think I should be within the mark in estimating the value of the cargo at fifty thousand pounds, and the vessel at as much more.

I found the preliminary instruction I had received at the *Haven of Rest* of incalculable service to me, and by the end of the first week I could take my share of work as well as some of the lads who had been two voyages to sea.

I was strong, robust, and tall for my age, having grown greatly both in stature and strength since I had been with my uncle.

I was now over sixteen years of age, with an excellent constitution, and as active as a squirrel.

I could furl a royal single handed, take a yard-arm off a topgallant-sail, and set a stunsail from the topsail as well as any A. B. on board.

I must say I did not like the diet at first, but in time I got used to that.

For breakfast we had tea, biscuits, and salt pork or beef from the previous day's dinner; usually, however, we contrived to have some kind of a hash, made from soaked biscuit and chopped meat, seasoned with pepper and salt.

For dinner there was boiled salt beef or pork, and pea-soup or "duff" on alternate days. Twice a week preserved potatoes were served out, and this, with molasses with the "duff," formed our ordinary fare.

Although the provisions had nothing to boast of in quality or quantity, we were practically unrestricted, though we had signed articles for certain allowances by weight of everything. It was well understood, however, that there would be no restriction of anything in moderation, so long as crew and officers kept on good terms.

For some time I was terribly put about by the short hours allowed for sleep, and found the watch on board the *Phantom* a very different thing from that on the *Haven of Rest*.

I never got more than three hours and a half of sleep

at one time, and to a growing lad as I was, this came very hard.

Many and many a time when my watch has been called, I have felt as though I would give everything I possessed in the world for one more hour's sound sleep.

But it could not be, and, willing or unwilling, I had to turn out and go on deck.

For the benefit of such of my readers who do not know the nature of life at sea, I will just give a brief sketch thereof, and it will be seen that it is not all a bed of roses.

Suppose we begin at the commencement of the nautical day—noon. At this hour all hands, in fine weather, and the watch only in rough, go to dinner.

Half an hour is allowed for that meal, and usually a few minutes for the smoke afterwards, the deprivation of which makes Jack growl terribly. Then, in some cases, as that of a new ship like the *Phantom*, all hands are called on deck, and kept at work on the rigging, or whatever may be necessary. At four bells in the first dog watch (six o'clock) there is supper, which consists invariably of what is left from dinner and tea, saturated with molasses.

Then the day's work is finished, and the watches set for the night.

At eight bells my watch comes on deck and keeps the vigil till midnight. At that hour the other watch, the starboard or second mate's, is called. We, however, of the port or larboard watch, cannot leave the deck until the others turn out—a matter of ten minutes at least. Then there is undressing and turning into bunks, and a few minutes spent in talk, so that we can seldom get to sleep until half-past twelve at the earliest. At four o'clock punctually we are called again, just as we are getting into the best of our sleep, and have to turn out on deck, cold, drowsy, and miserable.

At seven bells (half-past seven) the other watch is called to breakfast, while we, who have been at work since six o'clock washing down decks, have to wait till eight.

At half-past eight all hands are turned out to work on

the rigging, and, with the exception of the dinner hour, this is kept up all day, so that in this case we get only three hours and a half clear sleep out of the twenty-four—certainly not enough to keep men in health and strength.

The next night, owing to the two dog watches—from four to six and from six to eight—the arrangements for the night are changed, and, instead of being on deck till midnight, we turn in, to turn out again at twelve and keep the middle watch. At four o'clock in the morning we again turn in, to be called to breakfast at seven bells (half-past seven), after which the day's work commences for all hands.

Thus it will be seen that on one night we get three hours and a half sleep only, viz., from half-past twelve till four; and on the next night three hours and a half and three hours, six hours and a half altogether, or an average of five hours.

This, it will be admitted, is not sufficient to recruit nature and keep the body in good health.

In practice, however, the sailor, in fine weather, when all hands are at work in the day time, manages to snatch some sleep during the night watches.

One man of the watch goes to the helm; another takes the look-out on the forecastle; while as to the rest of the watch, they can lie about the decks, under the bulwarks, on spare sails, or wherever they may choose to stow themselves for a nap, provided always they are ready at a moment's notice to trim the yards or spring aloft to make or take in sail.

No one who has never been a voyage to sea as one of the crew of a vessel can form any idea of the rapidity with which time slips away.

From the system of watch and watch there seems to be no division between the days, and unless a journal is kept, it is difficult to take account of the flight of time.

A fortnight slipped rapidly away, and, as we had been favoured with fair winds, we were now in the tropics, making good progress before the north-east trade wind for the equator. I had now become thoroughly accustomed to life at sea, and, by the assistance of old Jack

Slatter, who had taken a great fancy to me, I was rapidly becoming a smart sailor.

By the time we had been out twenty days the necessary work on the rigging was completed, shrouds set up and turned in, fresh ratlines put on fore and aft, and an abundance of chafing gear fitted; the decks were hollystoned down, lime-juice being used to whiten the planks of the quarter-deck, the masts scraped, and the brass and iron work cleaned and polished.

This having been done, there remained nothing else to do beyond keeping the vessel clean and trimming the sails, which could of course be done easily by one watch.

So to my great delight we were now put on watch and watch. Thus on alternate days we had the forenoon and the afternoon at our own disposal.

Some occupied themselves in mending their clothes, washing, making models, reading, and so on, while some few turned in and slept.

I, for my part, amused myself by writing up my log, from which this narrative is compiled; in improving myself in navigation, and in learning fresh knots and splices under the eye of Jack Slatter.

The watch on deck had very little to do now, and were principally employed in sail-making, mat-making, and spun-yarn twisting.

The trade wind was quite steady, and the yards sometimes did not require trimming for a whole day together.

Notwithstanding the quiet even tenor of our lives at this period, there was no dulness or *ennui*.

In the two dog watches there was abundance of skylarking, and some of the sailors who had voices and some little musical skill were asked to blacken their faces and give an entertainment on the quarter-deck as negro minstrels. A banjo, bones, fiddle, and fife made up the instrumental accompaniment on these occasions. Shoals of flying fish, pursued by other shoals of dolphins and bonetta, were now common, and scarce an hour passed, night or day, without our hearing the patter-patter of hundreds of these wonderful little creatures as they dipped into the sea all around the vessel, the sound resembling that made by a shower of rain.

During my watch, when in the day time, I used to take delight in fishing for bonetta and dolphins.

This I accomplished in the following manner :—

Taking a long line with a large hook, baited with a piece of red calico, I used to go out on the jibboom, and then lower it into the water in such a way that the hook and piece of rag would dance from wave to wave, just skimming the surface.

The fish, bonetta especially, were greatly attracted by this, probably taking it for their habitual food—flying fish.

It seldom happened that I had to wait longer than half an hour, if there were any bonetta about, before one of them would come with a leap and a rush and seize bait and hook, Jack hauling the fish quickly in, a task of considerable difficulty; sometimes I would make the best of my way on board and proceed to kill and clean my prey for supper.

Cut into slices, and fried with pepper, salt, and vinegar, these fish are excellent eating.

Perhaps, however, the most delicious little fish is the spiral or flying fish, which, when caught, are considered a great delicacy, and usually presented to the Captain, for the cabin table.

There is, however, no way of catching them except, as is sometimes the case, they fly over the ship and drop on board in their desperate efforts to escape from the dolphins and bonetta, which continually chase them.

Occasionally, too, a shoal of porpoises would come in sight, charging down on the vessel, leaping, tumbling, and snorting, like a lot of mad things.

No matter how strong the breeze or how fast the vessel was going, these animals would always keep ahead with ease, their great delight being to tumble and plunge about in the broken water around the vessel's bows. Sometimes one would be caught by means of a harpoon and strong line, and then for several days there would be porpoise steak and forcemeat balls with our meals. And here I will relate the very first adventure which befell me since we had sailed from Bristol.

CHAPTER VIII.

ADVENTURE WITH A PORPOISE.

ONE sultry afternoon, when the wind was very light, I perceived a shoal of porpoises making for the ship.

I called Jack Slatter and told him, but he was in his bunk, drowsy from the heat, and did not care about disturbing himself for the sport.

The same was the case with several others of my watchmates, and as all the watch on deck were engaged on the quarter-deck, middle-stitching an old topsail, I resolved to attempt to harpoon one myself.

It was a mad idea, considering the great size, weight, and strength of these fish (or rather animals, for they are warm-blooded, and cannot live without rising to the surface continually to breathe), but I was young and inexperienced, and saw no reason why I should not succeed. Accordingly, taking the harpoon and line, I went out on the dolphin-striker beneath the jibboom, and waited until one should pass directly underneath me. Fastening the end of the line round my waist, I hung up the coil on a guy, and, harpoon in hand, waited and watched for my chance. Several times a porpoise passed nearly directly underneath me, but from want of skill I again and again missed.

At last one huge fellow shot up right beneath my feet, and kept in the same relative position for a second or two.

The opportunity was an excellent one, and, tyro as I was at the sport, I drove the harpoon deeply into his back.

With a tremendous plunge he leapt right out of the water, and then started off to windward at a rapid pace.

In a few minutes the coil was all run out.

I had by no means calculated on the strength of the brute, thinking that having the line fast round my body, I could hold on until I got assistance, for which I shouted the instant I had made the successful shot with the harpoon. But with a terrible snatch and jerk I found myself rudely torn from my position, although I

clasped the dolphin-striker with my arms. I believe that had I not let go, my shoulder-joints would have been dislocated, so terrible was the tug when the coil was all gone.

The next instant I found myself in the sea, dragged through the water and under the surface in a manner which well-nigh took my senses away.

It was fully half a minute before I could get my head up and call out. Fortunately, the catastrophe had been seen, for I do not think that my half-choked scream for help could have been heard. The porpoise now relaxed somewhat in his speed, the fury of the first rush having in a measure exhausted him.

It was lucky for me that it was a breathing fish, and being compelled to come to the surface all the more from the exertions he made, could not dive deeply and drag me down. As it was, however, he kept on steadily, going dead in the wind's eye, at the rate of five or six miles an hour, of course dragging me after him.

Every now and again I would be dragged completely through a wave, not being able to rise above it, owing to the force with which the porpoise tugged at the line.

How I hoped that the harpoon would draw, and release me from the terrible strain of the line, which seemed as though it must cut me in two!

In a few minutes I was fully half a mile dead to windward of the ship, and my unruly prey still kept dragging me on through the water.

To swim against the strength of the big fish I found utterly impossible, so was forced to content myself with keeping my head above water, a matter of no little difficulty.

Presently I took an opportunity, when for a moment my prey slackened his speed, to look back at the ship.

She was now fully a mile distant, but I observed with satisfaction that a boat was being lowered.

After a momentary pause the porpoise again dashed ahead, and I was dragged through the water as fast as ever.

"Surely this cannot last," I said to myself, panting for breath; "if it does, it will soon be all over with me."

I felt myself getting weaker, my breathing more laborious, and the pain from the cord around my middle worse, I vainly endeavouring to unfasten the knot. The great strain on the line had tightened it in a manner which made it impossible for me to get it loose.

Like a fool and a lubber, I had left my knife below, or otherwise I could quickly have cut the cord.

As it was, I found myself being helplessly dragged through the sea by the porpoise I had harpooned. I had indeed "caught a Tartar!"

After being towed in this manner for fully a quarter of an hour, all which time I was perfectly helpless, I observed with some satisfaction that the pace decreased. I was, however, very far from safe, for as the fish got more exhausted and weak, so did I, and it was with difficulty I kept my head above water.

And all the time, too, the porpoise kept steadily on, dead to windward, at the rate of about four knots an hour.

Looking back, I could see that a boat was lowered and pulling towards me, but, so far as I could make out, it seemed to approach very slowly, if, indeed, it gained anything on the porpoise. By this time I was fully two miles from the vessel, and fast becoming exhausted.

Again and again my head went under water, despite my most strenuous efforts, and I was half choked by the gulps of salt brine I was forced to take.

I now began to give myself up for lost, and had not strength even to look back for the boat, or to offer any resistance to the indefatigable fish—so obviously bent, as it seemed, on my destruction.

All at once, however, just as I had finally ceased to hope, I felt the line slacken, and then my onward course stopped. Paddling with my hands, I kept my head above water and drew a breath, a thing I was greatly in need of.

At a little distance ahead I saw the large fish snorting and spurting water tinged with blood. I now tried to unfasten the knot which kept the line fast round my waist, but in vain; and, to my horror, after resting about

a minute, my ocean steed again started off, heading dead to windward, as before.

I don't mean to say that I absolutely despaired, but my heart sank within me and I was prepared for the worst.

That I could much longer survive was out of the question; and it seemed pretty certain that the porpoise would drown me before the boat could come up.

In a few minutes the fish again paused in its onward career, and once more I was enabled to take breath and rest myself a little.

I could now hear the shouts of the men in the boat, and made her out about a mile to leeward. After a briefer rest than before, the porpoise started off, and I was again dragged through the water in a half-drowning state.

Fortunately, this spurt was a shorter one, as the fish was obviously getting weaker; not a whit too early, for I verily believe that another five minutes of this work would have drowned me.

Imagine my delight, when, after another short start, the porpoise again stopped, and turned belly upwards on the surface of the sea.

After some struggling and splashing about, the great brute lay quite still, and I knew that I was safe. In a few minutes the boat came up, and I was dragged on board, all but completely exhausted.

The porpoise was towed in triumph behind the boat and hoisted on board the ship.

Thus ended this adventure, which had well-nigh proved fatal to me.

As I ate a steak off the porpoise which had so nearly drowned me, I piously resolved, when next I used a harpoon, not to make the end of the line fast round my body.

Of course I was chaffed without mercy by the sailors for my folly in suffering myself to be dragged overboard and nearly drowned by a fish: but this I could afford to put up with, thinking myself fortunate that the affair had ended no worse.

Shortly after this the trade wind failed us, and we entered the region of calms and light winds near the equator, called the "doldrums."

Our progress across this part was slow and tedious in the extreme; calms and light airs, with tremendous torrents of rain, were the prevailing characteristics of the weather. However, crawling along at the rate of some twenty miles a day, we reached the line, and now began to look forward for the south-east trade wind.

CHAPTER IX.

IN THE TROPICS.—A SHARK.—A STORM AT SEA.

WHEN the *Phantom* came on the equator, the weather was scorchingly hot.

At noon the sun was right overhead, and poured down his burning rays perpendicularly on the ship.

Awnings were spread fore and aft, but in spite of this, and constantly wetting the decks, the planks became so hot as to burn the bare feet of the sailors, and compelled them to wear shoes.

The pitch in the seams boiled and bubbled up, and the tar in the rigging melted and ran down.

For three days the vessel lay amidst a dead calm, the sails idly flapping against the masts as she slowly pitched to the long Atlantic swell.

Save for this slow and solemn upheaving of the bosom of the great ocean, she floated on a glass-like expanse of sea, unruffled by the slightest ripple.

So utter was the absence of wind, and, consequently, of motion, that it was found necessary to lower the boats each morning, in order to tow the vessel out of the dirty water around her.

The sailors were allowed to bathe—a good look-out being kept from aloft for sharks—a privilege of which I gladly availed myself.

As for work, it was out of the question, even had

there been any to do, so intense and terrible was the heat.

On crossing the equator, there was the usual sky-larking, and I, with other greenhorns, had to submit to have my face smeared with tar, scraped off with an iron hoop by way of a razor, and then soused backwards into a tub of water.

This tomfoolery has been so often described, that I need not here weary the reader with a description of all the doings on board the *Phantom*, when Neptune, the God of the Sea, hailed and came up over the bows, with a swab on his head for hair, and the identical harpoon with which I had transfixed the porpoise for a trident.

It would seem very tame in print; nevertheless, it was capital fun in reality; and when I had been through the ordeal myself, I heartily enjoyed it, as did the cabin passengers, who, fortunately for themselves, are exempted.

At last the long spell of calms and catspaws came to an end, and a gentle breeze arose, before which the vessel glided smoothly through the water at the rate of two or perhaps three knots an hour.

In three or four days' time we might expect to fall in with the cool and refreshing south-east trade wind.

"A man overboard!"

The cry, repeated from mouth to mouth, ran like lightning through the ship, and all hands came tumbling up.

I was on the poop, coiling up some ropes, at the time, and immediately threw the life-buoy, which hung at the taffrail.

But the man, a fine young sailor, Thompson by name, was by this time fully thirty yards astern, having fallen from the mizentopmast yard-arm, the ship slipping rather fast through the water.

The starboard quarter boat was always kept ready for launching, but on this occasion the oars were not in her.

I ran forward and got them as quickly as possible, and then jumped in, accompanied by three men and the second mate.

As the man was a good swimmer, and all sail was set, the vessel was not brought up with the wind, but all haste was made to take in stunsails and heave the main-yard aback.

From the mizentop the chief mate kept his eye on the man swimming astern, and directed us which way to row, as we could not see on account of the waves.

Long after we were out of hail he guided us towards the man overboard by holding up his right or left hand, accordingly as it was necessary for the boat to be steered to port or starboard.

Thompson was known to be a powerful swimmer, and though by the time we settled down to the oars he was fully a mile and a half astern, not the slightest anxiety was felt concerning him.

As I sat at the oar, my face was, of course, to the ship, my back in the direction in which we were rowing.

All at once I perceived the chief mate in the mizen-top gesticulating violently, and called the attention of the officer steering thereto.

"Give way, men!" he cried. "Give way with a will. There must be something wrong with Thompson, for the mate's signalling as hard as he can."

The men bent their backs to the oars, and the boat flew through the water in the presumed direction of our shipmate.

The second officer stood up in the stern-sheets and endeavoured to make out the man's position, but in vain.

The first intimation we received of being near him was a loud and piercing shriek, or rather scream, of agony, which thrilled to the very marrow of my bones.

Of the reason for that terrible scream of agony we were ignorant, till the second mate shouted out, "A shark! A shark! Pull, men, for life and death!"

We did pull, with a will, almost lifting the light boat out of the water.

But we heard the scream no more, and though the helmsman eagerly scanned the surface of the ocean, we could not see anything of Thompson.

"Avast rowing!"

We lay on our oars and gazed blankly in each other's faces, as the boat shot ahead from her acquired impetus. Happening to cast my eyes over the gunwale on to the sea, I started violently, and then turned deadly faint and sick. The sea was tinged with blood! No word was said, but in solemn silence we rowed round and round the spot.

In vain; save the blood-stained water, which told too surely of our unfortunate comrade's fate, we could find no trace of him. He had been seized and dragged down by a shark; of that there could be no doubt.

Although we were now aware it was almost hopeless, we rowed round and round for half an hour, loth to give him up as lost.

Presently a sharp cry from the second officer, who was standing up in the stern-sheets, called our attention, and looking out on the starboard side, at a distance of about twenty yards, we could see the dorsal fin of a huge shark—the monster to whose voracity our unfortunate shipmate had fallen a prey.

We watched the brute sail away, doubtless having gorged himself with the flesh of this poor sailor, and then with sad hearts rowed back to the vessel.

This was the first death since we set sail, and it threw a deep gloom over all of us.

A comrade lost overboard is a very different thing from one who dies on shore.

In the one case there is the grave and tombstone, and we know where the mortal remains of the deceased lie; but in the other case there is nothing but a blank—an empty bunk—an unowned chest.

His berth in the forecastle was next to mine, and every time I went below, the sight of it brought to my mind the sad fate of poor William Thompson, as smart a young sailor as ever trod a plank.

Two days after this disaster we took the south-east trade, and hauling our wind to the southward and westward till we came close to the coast of South America, where the trade left us, we headed for the stormy latitudes to the south of the Cape of Good Hope.

Sea birds, Cape pigeons, stormy petrels, and the grand albatross, now hovered about the vessel, and in latitude 47° S. a fierce north-east gale met the good ship dead in the teeth.

At first the topgallant sails were taken in, and a single reef in the topsails; but the barometer continuing to fall and the sea and wind to rise, the ship was put under close-reefed topsails, reefed foresail, foretopmast staysail, and maintrysail.

At midnight, just as the watch was being relieved, the mizentopsail split from clue to earing with a report like a clap of thunder.

Before the sail could be secured, it was blown all to pieces, and as the gale was obviously increasing in fury, the ship was hove-to, under close-reefed maintopsail and storm-staysail.

A tremendous sea rapidly rose, and now, for the first time, I began to experience the hardships and dangers of a sailor's life.

The wind howled and moaned among the cordage in a dismal manner, the hull of the vessel was enveloped in a cloud of spray, and ever and anon she would take a huge green sea clean over the bows, making it necessary for the watch to take to the rigging to save themselves from being washed overboard.

It was now bitterly cold, and frequent squalls of rain and sleet burst on the vessel, drenching the men to the skin, in spite of oil-jackets and sou'-westers.

Dawn broke on a scene of wild grandeur—a dark leaden sky, a broad expanse of ocean, with huge white-crested waves ceaselessly rushing from the wind's eye, seemingly bent on overwhelming the ship.

As one of these monsters, a veritable white-crested "sea-horse," as the sailors called them, would strike the vessel on the bow, deluging her decks with water, and sending the spray flying to the tops, she would tremble in every plank from the shock.

As the gale showed no sign of abatement, and the sea hourly rose, the captain and officers began to look grave.

The hatches were battened down, and the pump-well sounded every ten minutes.

The vessel now began to make water considerably, but it was a matter of utter impossibility for the men to stand at the pumps, so all that could be done was to wait and hope that the gale would blow itself out.

Hitherto I had only experienced the smooth side of a sailor's life; now, however, I began to have a taste of the hardships, fatigues, and dangers incident thereto.

The maintop-gallant-sail having blown loose, carried away the mast with a crash, and this caused also the loss of the foretop-gallant-mast and flying jibboom.

The work of clearing away the wreck occupied five hours, and by the time that, exhausted, wet, and miserable, we had finished this, the foresail also blew loose, and all hands were sent aloft to secure it.

Night had again come on, and the storm raged with increased fury.

It was intensely cold, and heavy squalls of hail and sleet stiffened the sail until the canvas was like a sheet of iron.

The canvas was of the strongest, and resisted the fury of the wind, though often it seemed that as it thrashed and flopped in the gale it must be torn to ribbons.

It was midnight before we got this sail secured, and on coming down on deck we found that the sea broke so constantly and pitilessly over the bows as to render it utterly unsafe to remain even for a minute.

So, wet, cold, and miserable as we all were, we clambered into the fore and main rigging, and there, holding on as best we could, we were till daylight exposed to the full fury of the wind, drenched by spray, sleet, and rain. Meanwhile, during the night the wind had been slowly hauling from the north-east round to the north-west, and at sunrise, the gale still blowing with unabated violence, the captain determined to put her before the wind and run her to the south-west.

In fact, she strained and pitched so violently as to cause her to leak badly, and threaten to pitch the masts out of her.

In such a gale, and with so tremendous a sea running, to put her before the wind was a manœuvre full of danger.

In the first place a huge wave might rush up astern and poop the vessel before she could gather sufficient speed to keep well ahead of these dangerous rollers. Then it might be found impossible to steer, in which case she would probably fly up in the wind again, and then it was almost certain that the decks would be swept by the sea, and probably the masts blown out of her. However, our captain resolved that the essay should be made, relying on his own skilful seamanship and that of his crew, with the known good qualities of the vessel, to pull safely through.

"All hands wear ship!" he shouted through the speaking-trumpet; and every man prepared to jump down the instant she began to pay off before the wind.

"Hard a-weather!" shouted the captain, and the helm being put to port, we waited for her head to pay off from the wind.

But from the fury of the gale she was almost on her beam ends—her lee yardarms sometimes dipping in the water. Consequently she would not obey her helm, and the order was given to hoist the foretopmast staysail. No sooner, however, was this done, than, with a few furious flaps, it was all blown to ribbons, and that before it could have any effect in causing her head to pay off.

"A tarpaulin in the fore rigging!" was the next order; and after great difficulty three or four men got one up and spread it across the shrouds to windward, where it was instantly jammed tight by the force of the gale in such a manner as to require no lashings. This had its effect, and the ship began slowly to pay off from the wind.

As she began to right herself, the hardy sailors leapt from the rigging to the deck and hastened to square the yards. As for me, I was so stiff and benumbed through being for hours exposed to the pitiless blast, that I could hardly crawl.

The vessel, after a few moments, during which she rolled and tumbled in the trough of the sea, shipping large quantities of water over the quarter, gathered head-

way, and, like a frightened horse, started on her mad career through the foaming ocean.

Four men at the wheel could scarcely keep her head in the right direction, as away she sped before the furious wind, gaining from four to five points each way.

The captain thought she would steer better, and there would be less chance of her broaching-to, if she carried more head-sail. Anxiously the order was given to loose and set the close-reefed foretopsail and foresail.

This was done, and now the vessel tore ahead at increased speed, almost outstripping the huge rolling waves which roared and thundered astern and on either quarter.

For a time she sped on tolerably easy, and a spell was got at the pumps, although she rolled so heavily as to render it a difficult task.

I had just come off a spell, and had thrown myself, exhausted, on the main hatch, when I heard the captain's voice roaring through the trumpet,—

“Lay aft here with relieving tackle. The wheel chains have parted. Stand by to run up the jib and trim the headyards as she broaches-to.”

Instantly all was hurry and apparent confusion, for the danger was imminent, and not a moment was to be lost.

The mate shouted to me to stand by the starboard fore-braces, and I hastened to do so.

The vessel now began to broach-to on the starboard tack.

“Hoist the jib,” cried the captain; “let go the starboard fore-braces, and haul on the port.”

I immediately proceeded to obey, and the jib being partially hoisted at the same time, there seemed a chance that she might pay off before the wind.

But, with a noise like the report of a gun, the furious wind split the sail, and in a few seconds there were only a few fluttering rags remaining.

There was no time to hoist any other sail, and the ship came right up in the wind.

The experienced sailors, foreseeing the probability of

the decks being swept by a sea, struggled into the rigging—a matter of no small difficulty, by reason of the force of the gale.

I managed to get a few ratlines up the main rigging, when I was jammed tight by the pressure of the wind, and for a moment or two could neither move upwards nor downwards.

A tremendous sea struck her full on the bow, came clear over the forecastle, and rushing along the deck, swept all before it.

The galley (or cook-house), a sort of wooden box, in which were the ship's coppers, &c., was torn from its fastenings and dashed into splinters against the lee bulwarks.

The water casks were also torn from their fastenings and stove in.

The bulk-head of the cabin went down before the rush of water like paper, and the great wave finally burst through the after cabin windows, and went roaring back to the sea, carrying with it, as trophies of its rage, splinters of wood and water casks, tables, chairs, crockeries, and, in fact, every article on deck from stem to stern-post.

This was not the worst of it, for almost simultaneously I heard a loud sharp report, and then the crash of falling spars; looking aloft, I saw the maintopmast, with all its gear, fall into the sea to leeward.

This was followed by the foretop-gallant-mast, and then by the mizenmast, which broke off close to the deck.

Then the ship began slowly to pay off from the wind, by reason of the greater surface which the headyards and spars presented to the gale. There only remained now aft the mainmast and the stump of the mizenmast.

CHAPTER X.

IN THE ICE FIELDS.

For a time there was imminent danger of a hole being stove in the vessel's bottom by some of the wreck of the masts which had gone over, and which were still attached to the ship by the ropes and rigging.

But as she gathered way, and, urged on by the storm-blast, started off afresh on her mad career, like a frightened runaway horse, who kicks himself free of harness, she cleared herself of masts, spars, and rigging, and rushed ahead before the wind at the rate of ten or twelve miles an hour, though not a stitch of canvas was or could be set.

Though she rolled considerably, rendering locomotion on the decks rather difficult, it was now possible to work the pumps and ascertain what damage had been done.

There were eight feet of water in the hold, so the weary and exhausted crew of the unfortunate *Phantom* were again set to work at the pumps.

The men were divided into three gangs, two of which took alternate spells at the pumps, while the third, to which I belonged, was employed in repairing, as far as possible, the damage done by wind and wave and working the ship.

The monotonous clank, clank of the pumps, the hoarse howl of the storm, and the threatening roar of the angry sea, made up, indeed, a dismal chorus.

While the gale lasted in its present fury, it was hopeless to attempt even to fit a jury-rudder, so all that could be done was to let her tear ahead before the wind, which had now hauled nearly due north.

After twelve hours' incessant labour, the vessel was nearly cleared of water, and the damage done partially repaired.

The storm, however, though it occasionally abated slightly, broke forth again and again in fresh bursts of terrible violence, so that at last even the stoutest hearted among the men began to despair. Those of weak con-

stitution had, at the end of the fourth day after the commencement of the gale, succumbed to the hardships and fatigue they had undergone.

For four days we had been without dry clothes, and for three without any cooked food, by reason of the destruction of the cook's galley by the sea.

Biscuit, soaked in brandy, and occasionally a few raisins, was what we subsisted on; and it was probably the brandy which enabled us to sustain the terrible and continuous labour.

I have said that two-thirds of the crew were kept at work at the pumps, while the rest were at work steering the vessel, and so forth.

This latter, though hard labour enough, wet and miserable as we all were, was not so hard as the dismal heart-breaking toil of pumping, to which, one by one, seven of the crew succumbed.

It was now of course necessary that every man should take his turn at the pumps, including even the captain; for though the vessel had been nearly cleared of water, it yet required all the remaining strength and endurance of the enfeebled men to keep the leak from gaining on them. That if this terrible gale lasted in its present force for many more hours, the water would again get the upper hand, was a matter of absolute certainty, and the ultimate fate of the ship and all on board assured.

But at noon on the fifth day after the commencement of the storm, the mercury in the barometer began to rise slightly, and the wind abated in violence. Still, however, it blew a hard gale—so much so as to render it impossible to repair the rudder and get up jury-masts.

For five days the vessel had now been scudding before a northerly gale, and in that time we had traversed sixteen or seventeen degrees of latitude, or more than a thousand miles.

The temperature had been very cold, as from latitude 40° S. we had gone as far as 58°.

So prolonged a gale from one point was a phenomenon which the oldest sailor on board had never experienced or heard of in those latitudes, and the captain himself declared that it was unprecedented.

The violence of the storm slackened, but too slowly for our exhausted energies; but it did abate, and that was something.

When at the end of a week the decks were once more dry, and, the sea having gone down, we were enabled to fix the cook's stores and boilers, and kindle a fire, the weather was so cold that we—poor pallid emaciated beings—could with difficulty persuade ourselves to keep away from the grateful warmth.

Never shall I forget how welcome—nay, even delicious—a pannikin of hot coffee, with a dash of brandy in it, tasted. It seemed to put new life in us, and infused fresh strength in our all but exhausted frames.

The wind still blew hard from the northward—so hard that it was with the greatest difficulty, and after many failures, that we rigged an apology for a rudder.

Even when this was done we could not haul our wind, or even lay to, until we had sent aloft another maintop-sail and rigged a jury mizen-mast. We tried it once, and having set the foresail, foretopsail, jib, and mainsail, got the vessel broadside to the wind. But the want of after-sail told, and she quickly payed off again, and once more we scudded before the gale to the south.

No time was lost in rigging a jury mizen-mast, and sending up another maintopmast.

The men, however, were so weakened and exhausted by the incessant labour they had undergone, that what should have been the work of a day occupied three. At last, however, the topmast was sent aloft, the yard crossed, and a jury mizen-mast, on which could be set a fore-and-aft sail, rigged.

Then we made sail and hauled up to the wind, which still blew steadily from the north.

It was now intensely cold, and on the very night of the day on which this had been accomplished, a fresh event happened.

We were more than a thousand miles from land, and far from the track of all vessels.

The wind blew from the N.N.E. a fresh breeze, under which we were heading to the nor'-west under topsails, courses, and jib. It was my watch on deck, and as there

was nothing doing, I and the rest of the crew were crouching by the coppers in the caboose to take advantage of the heat which still remained, the fire not having been long out.

“A light on the lee bow!”

This cry, from the man on the look-out, filled us all with astonishment, and deserting the warm galley, we hurried on deck. Looking out over the lee bulwarks, a pale flickering light, like that of a star, could be discerned on the horizon.

The more we looked the more we wondered. There was a moon, and above us the sky was clear; but it was clouded near the horizon, so that this could not be a star.

And yet what could it be? The hue of the light was too pale—too bluish—to be that of a vessel, and we all knew it could not be a shore light. As we gazed, it vanished, and at that same moment the moon was obscured by a cloud.

For a minute or so, however, there appeared three lights of the same appearance—uncertain, flickering, and pale blue.

Jack Platter, who had jumped upon the rail, suddenly shouted,—

“There she twinkles!”

This was Greek to me; but some of the old sailors at once understood it, and the cry arose,—

“Icebergs!”

It was indeed so. The moon, flashing her rays on these floating masses of ice, caused the illusive appearance of a light—a phenomenon well known to those who sail in the Polar Seas.

We had been driven so far southward out of our course as actually to have approached so near to the Antarctic zone as to encounter these wonderful objects.

“All hands ’bout ship!”

In ten minutes the vessel was heading to the south-east, in order to avoid the dangerous proximity of the ice.

But scarcely had she gathered way when a cry was heard from the look-out,—

"There she twinkles!"

"Where away?" shouted the captain.

"Right ahead!"

"Back the mainyard!"

Scarcely had this been done and the vessel hove to, than again we heard the cry,—

"There she twinkles!"

Looking out on the sea, a strange and lovely scene presented itself. The starlike, flickering gleam of icebergs could be distinguished in a dozen different places, vanishing suddenly, and as suddenly reappearing, as the moon's light was reflected. Shortly after midnight the sky became overcast, and the twinkling lights were seen no more. The wind hauled slowly towards the west, and though it only blew moderately, our captain considered it too dangerous to go ahead, surrounded as we were by these icy monsters. Towards morning a heavy fog or mist settled down over the sea, and when day broke we could not see a hundred fathoms from the ship.

But though we could not see, we could hear; and what fell on our ears was enough to cause alarm in all consciences.

A continual grinding, groaning, and rumbling, varied by wild reports, like cannon-shots, and crashing noises, as though whole forests of trees were being felled at once, were heard. The old hands, and such as had before been in high latitudes, looked grave, and declared that we were in the close proximity not only of icebergs, but also of ice fields, and that it was quite possible we might be surrounded by them, and then our frail barque would be crushed like an eggshell; or, at the very least, we should be frozen up all the winter and shifted about with the floes.

When the fog partially cleared away, a strange and wonderful sight met our eyes.

West, north, and south, a vast field of ice, dotted with icebergs and hummocks, the whole lot heaving, tossing, and grinding together in a terrible manner.

It seemed as though two vast floes had met, one from the south-east, the other coming from the south-west,

The effect of this was that huge blocks of ice were piled upon the opposing masses, the noise sounding like repeated claps of thunder.

To the eastward also there were icebergs and detached floes of ice, but between these there were open channels; and now that it was daylight, the vessel was got under way and cautiously steered away from the splendid but dangerous scene. The peril and difficulty of the passage can only be realized by those who have been amongst ice. At one moment the ship would be hemmed in between two lowering mountains of ice, which threatened to crush her, and if they should close would certainly do so.

More than once the yard-arms actually scraped the ice walls; and looking aloft we saw, with blanched cheeks, a tremendous mass of frozen water reaching far above the mast-heads, and which seemed about to overwhelm us at every moment.

We were now about 20°, or 1,200 miles north of the Cape of Good Hope, and our course should have been NE. by N. The wind was from the north—an icy blast indeed, which almost froze the marrow in our bones. But the ice fields had drifted north of us, and the only clear water lay east and south-east; so perforce we worked our way slowly in that direction.

We saw in the ice floes prodigious quantities of seals and walruses, and the captain declared that had he only hoops and staves, and a cooper on board to make casks, he would load the vessel with oil, and clear more money for the owners than was possible by five East India voyages. We succeeded in shooting several when the wind was light and it was safe to lower a boat. I got the skin of one, and having scraped and cured it with brine, made it into a coverlet for my bunk.

One day I was at the wheel, and some words I heard from the captain, addressed to the mate, attracted my attention.

I never forgot them. They opened out to my young mind a scheme of ambition—a path of adventure hitherto untrodden, unattempted—I might almost say, unthought of.

There was ice to the north, ice to the west, ice to the east, with here and there tortuous channels between huge bergs and floes, which, groaning and crashing together, seemed to warn the navigator not to come near.

To the south alone, strange to say, there was a broad open channel a mile wide. The wind was from the north-west, and had this channel been our course, it would seem easy to sail away to the open sea, which could be seen beyond.

The navigation, on the other hand, is to the east and north-east. Our proper course was perilous and difficult.

"Confoundedly provoking!" said the mate to the captain. "Where we want to go it's all blocked up, and where we don't want to go, due south, there is a clear channel and open sea beyond."

"Yes," said the skipper, "it seems really that, if we were so inclined, we could make an achievement that would hand us down to fame and all eternity."

"What's that?" asked the mate.

"Why, sail right to the South Pole."

CHAPTER XI.

IN SYDNEY HARBOUR.

HEREAT both captain and mate laughed, but not so with me. The words sank deeply into my mind, and made a great impression.

The South Pole!

Again and again had glorious but unsuccessful attempts been made to reach the North Pole, and solve the problem as to what lay there—whether land, or as others thought, an open Polar Sea.

But no one had ever dreamed of essaying a voyage to the South Pole, where, for aught any one could tell, there might exist an unknown continent—strange animals never before thought of.

I called to mind that in the fifth quarter of the globe, which lay south, two animals, at least, entirely unknown before, had been discovered—the kangaroo and emu.

Who could say what yet more wonderful discoveries might be made at the Antarctic Pole? With a strange

and singular promptitude, fierce resolution took possession of my mind.

I would amass money—make a fortune, and then purchase and equip a ship, and start an expedition to penetrate to the South Pole—glorious thought!

My blood danced in my veins, and I felt a species of inspiration, such as Joan of Arc might have done when she girded on her armour and raised the siege of Orleans.

So firmly did this—as it might well seem—mad idea root itself in my mind, that for a long time I could think of nothing else; and when, after the lapse of some days, during which we slowly, and with great labour and peril, made our way through the drift and perceived the open sea to the east and north-east, I felt quite sorry to lose sight of the glistening field, the grand and grotesque-shaped icebergs, which served to remind me of my audacious and ambitious dream.

It was far otherwise, however, with the captain and crew of the unfortunate *Phantom*. Driven hundreds of miles out of their proper course, exposed for many days to a constant succession of hardships, dangers, and fatigues, both men and officers welcomed with frantic delight the open sea, across which they might sail to warmer and more pleasant latitudes to the port the vessel was bound to.

When the vessel finally got clear of the ice, she was about eight hundred miles from the south coast of Van Diemen's Land, which bore NNE. The vessel still leaked badly, and under all circumstances the captain determined to make for Melbourne or Sydney, in Australia, and refit.

So in place of tacking up to the north-west and rounding the west coast of the great Australian continent, the vessel was steered to the north-east, and Botany Bay was announced as our destination in the first instance.

Even now that we had escaped from the ice, bad luck seemed to pursue the ship.

We encountered a succession of head winds, and two gales of wind which, but for the overwhelming fury of the sea we had passed through, I should have considered terrible.

At last, however, we entered Sydney harbour and cast anchor off Pinchgut, after having been driven some thousands of miles out of our course, and delayed about four weeks. In fact, we ought by this time to have been at anchor off Calcutta, in the river Hooghly.

It took a month to repair the damages to the vessel's hull and refit; and this done, once more we hove up the anchor and set sail.

Good living, a pleasant climate, and not too hard work, had restored all hands to health and vigour; and we sailed away from Sydney as seaworthy a ship with as smart a crew as any captain could desire.

CHAPTER XII.

A TERRIBLE INCIDENT.

FOR a fortnight all went well, and then we came to the entrance of Torres Straits, a narrow passage between an island and the mainland of Australia.

These straits are exceedingly dangerous, by reason of the rapid current and the many sunken reefs in the channel, which, being some fathom or so beneath the surface, can scarcely be made out.

Now it happened that neither our captain nor any of the officers had ever passed through these straits, and the utmost caution was necessary.

Accordingly, we cast anchor every night, and sailed slowly and carefully by day, the captain or one of his officers being constantly posted on the foretopsail-yard, looking out for shoals and reefs ahead, which could only be distinguished by the difference in the colour of the water.

This still further retarded our progress, and when at last we passed through the straits and emerged into the Indian Ocean, the vessel had been five months out from England. We might calculate on being at least another five weeks before arriving at the mouth of the Hooghly, so that instead of making the passage out in ninety days, the *Phantom* would have been more than six months. And there was yet another thing against us. We approached the equator just at the worst time of the

year, when those terrible hurricanes, called cyclones, or circular storms, were most prevalent.

The sailors, in view of all we had suffered, shook their heads, and some old croakers predicted further misfortunes, "For," said they, "we had sailed on a Friday;" and that it is an unlucky day, and sure to be followed by disaster, is a superstition which for centuries seafaring men have believed and still cling to.

Once more wafted by gentle zephyrs, with calm sea and sunny sky, the *Phantom* crosses the equatorial line.

Then it fell dead calm, and for days we scarcely made twenty miles.

Light catpaws of wind, alternated by dead calm and tremendous showers of rain, was the characteristic of the weather. I have forgotten to state that we had taken on board a hundred and fifty thousand pounds sterling in Australian sovereigns, the product of the Sydney mint, then lately established. It was important that this large sum in specie should be quickly delivered in Calcutta, as exchange at the time of despatch was favourable, whereas, should the steamer which was to sail three weeks after us arrive first, taking out with her probably a larger quantity even, the market would be forestalled, and the gold speculators and merchants who had shipped the specie would make a loss instead of a profit.

A large commission was to be allowed over and above the freight if a quick passage were made. It really seemed most provoking, and I could feel for our skipper, who had a share in the vessel. There she lay—a fine ship—together with her cargo, with at least two hundred thousand pounds—a helpless log on the ocean!

And now I come to an incident of a startling and highly sensational character—a tremendous adventure, the consequences of which have been of terrible moment to me.

Hitherto I have been compiling from my journal. Now, however, I will give an extract from the log-book itself, written by me on the following day:—

AUGUST 25TH, 1854.—My birthday!—and what a day! My soul quails as I think of the terrible catastrophe which has happened—so sudden, so unprece-

dented, and so terribly fatal in its consequences. The sun rose on a sea of glass, the surface of the sea rising and falling slightly and slowly with the long Pacific swell. Another day of scorching, blinding heat was evidently in store for us—another day of forced inaction—another day becalmed on the line under a vertical sun. Forenoon watch on deck. After having washed her down, the boats were got out, and the vessel was towed out of the stagnant water around her about half a mile. Awnings spread on the quarter-deck—still the heat so intense that the pitch in the seams melts and bubbles up, and we are all compelled to wear shoes by reason of the scorching heat of the planks.

At noon the heat is almost insupportable, and though we have done no work, all of us are troubled with a consuming thirst. Fortunately there is abundance of fresh water, which the captain allows *ad libitum*. The air is close, sultry, and oppressive to breathe, and we crawl about the decks almost gasping. In order, in a measure, to keep the decks cool, the plan of keeping them wet was tried. But the sea-water evaporated rapidly, leaving behind a thin layer of salt. Were we so disposed, we could set up a manufactory of that article. I spend the afternoon in the lower fore-castle and write up my log. The men lie about the decks in the coolest and shadiest places they can find. The captain is asleep in the cabin, the mate ditto on the skylight. There is no man at the wheel, for of what use can the rudder be when the vessel lies absolutely motionless on the surface of the calm sea? Oh! for a breeze—a storm—a hurricane—anything to relieve this terrible monotony—to mitigate this fierce scorching heat.

2 P.M.—I have been to sleep, and dreamed I was at the *Haven of Rest*, lying on the green sward, while Polly sang to me and fanned me. I rise and go on deck, and am almost blinded by the dazzling, burning glare of the sun reflected from the unrippled sea. Heavy black squalls all round the horizon. Pray Heaven they may be wind. I fear, however, that they are only rain-squalls, many of which we have had already, and which are

seldom accompanied by any wind except a catspaw, which lasts a few minutes and then is gone. Even this, however, will be grateful, as the rain will cool the air and the scorched planks of the ship.

3 P.M.—The heavy black squalls increase in number and draw us on. They are evidently rain-squalls, as we can see the water coming down in torrents—in sheets absolutely. A distant rumbling sound, probably thunder, is also heard, and there is a peculiar feeling in the air I cannot describe. The sun still pours his scorching rays down from overhead—the dazzling clear sky offering a strange contrast to the heavy black clouds around two-thirds of the horizon.

4 P.M.—Eight bells.—We are now surrounded by tremendous black clouds, pouring forth torrents of water. The vessel still lies in a dead calm, the sails lazily flapping against the masts. We can, however, plainly hear the roaring patter of the rain as it descends from the overcharged clouds: gradually a change comes over the aspect of the scene. There is a lurid haze in the atmosphere, through which all objects appear of a bluish purple colour. An intense feeling of anxiety, a foreboding of coming danger, of something terrible about to happen, oppresses me and all on board. Men look in each other's faces with silent wondering dread impressed in their features. Meanwhile the haze I have spoken of thickens, and the sun, though not obscured, looks like a red wafer on a dark grey ground. Momentarily the gloom deepens as the black rain-clouds close around us and mount higher and higher towards the zenith. What is about to happen? A tempest, a hurricane, a whirlwind, or some terrible convulsion of nature? Who can say?

5 P.M.—The two bells of the first dog-watch has just struck—the sound of the bell is hollow and unreal; the gloom deepens, and we are now surrounded by huge wall-like black clouds, from which the water pours incessantly. We can see it coming down, as it appears, in solid volumes—can hear the cataract-like roar with which it pours down on the sea. Still, the rain, though coming nearer, does not reach the ship. It would seem

that the angry clouds wish to surround us, and then all closing in on the devoted barque, at once overwhelm her with the deluge. At last it comes. A cold blast of wind—a few drops of rain.

“All hands on deck!” shouts the captain. “Take in sail.”

The tramp of many feet is heard as the active sailors make to their proper posts.

“Clew up the topgallant sails and royals; down with the flying-jib. Bear a hand, lads; we’re going to have a snorter.”

“Jump into the foretop, Tom Holt,” shouted the mate, “and clear the topgallant halliards—they’re foul somewhere.”

* * * * *

CHAPTER XIII.

EXTRACT FROM TOM HOLT'S LOG.

26TH AUGUST, NOON.—I can scarcely realize the whole terrible truth. As I write, my trembling hand can scarce hold the pen!

Alone on the ocean! East, west, north, south, nothing but the wide expanse of sea—no sail—no object whatever in sight—and I the only living being on board the big ship! That I myself had been saved seems miraculous! As I look around I can scarce persuade myself that it is not all a terrible dream. Where are my shipmates, captain, officers, crew?—all swept to their last account! All swallowed up in one common ruin. Heaven send I keep my reason! I feel at times delirious, and inclined to leap overboard.

4 P.M.—I am calmer now, and can write a narration of the facts as they occurred. On reaching the foretop, the mate ordered me to remain, in order to keep the running gear clear. There was a topgallant stunsail in the top, and on this I seated myself and looked out on the strange and gloomy scene. My gaze was directed ahead, but presently a shout from the deck beneath, and the tramp of feet, called my attention, and I perceived that all hands had run over to the starboard

side, and were gazing with astonishment, probably not unmixed with fear, at one of the grandest and most mysterious of natural phenomena.

Waterspouts!

At least a dozen of them, of different dimensions, about half a mile on the starboard quarter. I was so lost in wonder and admiration as to feel no terror on the subject. The sea appeared in a great commotion, and was lashed into foam all around the bases of these monsters, by what appeared to be a furious wind. I could see the water being rushed up towards the clouds, where the spouts terminated, and noticed at the foot of each a considerable mound or hill of water. The whole were enveloped in a mist or cloud of spray, which rendered their outlines indistinct. The largest appeared to be about half a mile in height, and constantly oscillated and bent about in a most singular manner.

"Take in all sail—clew up everything!" shouted the captain, and awakening from the stupefaction which the wonderful spectacle had caused to a sense of the danger of their position, the sailors hastened to carry out these orders. In a few minutes all the sails were clewed up, and then the captain and mates proceeded to load one of the small cannon on the starboard side, and as soon as possible fired at the group of waterspouts.

The charge was grape, and took effect, as the waterspouts were not more than a quarter of a mile off by this time. With a tremendous noise of the rushing fall of water, the one nearest broke up. The sea was agitated as by a great storm, and a succession of huge waves, caused by the sudden fall of so great a volume of water, made the ship roll till the yardarms on either side nearly touched the water. Meanwhile a huge waterspout, borne as by the whirlwind, rapidly approached the ship. It really seemed that it came forth from the mist and spray in which it was enveloped to avenge the destruction of its fellow.

The gun was again fired, but the rolling of the ship and the hurry of the moment caused a bad shot, and the waterspout was uninjured. It reared hither and thither—now sweeping in a circle, now approaching the

vessel, now retreating, as if endowed with volition, and inclined to sport with its destined prey.

A furious blast now struck the ship, and all three top-gallant masts fell with a crash. I crouched down in the top, and half covered myself with the stunsail which was there, in order to seek protection as well as I could from the falling spars and rigging. I escaped this danger, and after a second or two again looked forth. The shrieking of the wind and the roaring rush of the water were now indeed terrible to hear. The wind changed suddenly to all points of the compass; at one moment a fierce blast would come from dead ahead, then altering, send the ship down stern foremost. Then it would as suddenly chop to the opposite points, blow fiercely for a second or two, and then again change. It appeared pretty evident that we were in the influence of that whirlwind which caused the waterspout. The latter was the great danger, and a cry of terror broke involuntarily from the men as the great column of water was seen tearing ahead, right for the ship, the upper portion bending and oscillating as though it would topple over on our devoted barque. It was now quite close, and our destruction appeared inevitable, as the vessel was evidently tearing down towards the spout by the suction of the water.

"Fire!" shouted the captain, pale as death, as indeed was every man on board.

There came the report of the cannon; then, as if by magic, the waterspout lost all form, and became a shapeless mass of falling water.

The upper portion seemed to bend over towards the vessel. First there came what was like a tremendous rain, then a solid sheet of water fell on the vessel, then a huge mass—I dare say many hundred tons in weight—dashed full on the deck. I was knocked down flat on the sail by the deluge, and felt the tremendous pressure of hundreds of thousands of gallons pouring on me from above. I did not lose consciousness. The time seemed an age. I expected, nay, almost hoped for, death, so great was the mental anguish I endured.

At last, however, to my surprise, the tremendous flood seemed to slacken, then cease. It appeared that only a comparatively small part of the enormous volume of water had fallen aloft, and that the greater quantity had been hurled, as it were, on the deck of the vessel in a slanting direction, falling in one huge lump. After a few seconds, during which I had a gasp or two of breath, I raised myself on my hands and knees, from the position on my face to which I was thrown by the shock. What I saw—or rather what I did *not* see—was little calculated to give me any hope.

The foretop, in which I was, shook and trembled violently, rocking to and fro in a short jerking manner. Holding on by one of the topmast shrouds, I looked over the edge of the top.

The ship had disappeared, and the water was half-way up the mast.

A cry of despair escaped me—for who, even at the very last, does not cling instinctively to life and hope, when even all ground of hope is gone?

The ship had disappeared, and at once it occurred to me that she was sinking—slowly and gradually, but nevertheless sinking.

It did not strike me then that this was a very singular way for a ship to perish, with an even keel and masts standing upright. Usually a vessel either plunged down into the vast abyss head or stern foremost, and that at once—not slowly, as it appeared the *Phantom* was sinking.

I now gave myself up for lost, and hiding my face in my hands, put up a short and fervent prayer to Heaven. I expected that in a very few seconds the vessel would sink, and I should be hopelessly struggling in the sea, which still foamed and eddied like a boiling cauldron. When next I looked, the first thing that struck me was that the waterspouts had all disappeared. The wind blew in fitful blasts, and the sea was rough, huge waves rising and falling simultaneously all around. But rainsqualls and waterspouts had all vanished together. It would seem that the destruction of one was the signal for the sudden collapse of all. Despite my desperate

situation, the imminence—nay, as I thought, the certainty—of a speedy death, I yet felt some interest and curiosity as to the manner of the sudden disappearance of both waterspouts and rain-squalls.

“Happening to cast my eyes over the top immediately beneath me, I there saw what filled me with amazement. For a time I was utterly bewildered, and could not understand what it all meant.

“The water had sunk, and was farther from the top than when I had looked before.

“The forecastle and poop-rail, and the tops of the bulwarks in the waist, were visible.

“*The ship was rising—not sinking!*

“A wild cry of joy broke from me as this fact burst upon my mind.

“I was unable to account for it at all: but there it was—of that there could be no doubt.

“Yes, the ship was slowly rising to the surface.

“Clinging to a shroud to steady myself—for the mast swayed to and fro considerably—I stood up, and watched and waited.

“Inch by inch, foot by foot, I saw the vessel rise from what I thought would be our common watery grave. Like some huge amphibious animal, she rose up slowly—with many a shake, groan, and quiver—until all the bulwarks could be seen, and the high raised deck of the poop and forecastle.

“The waist, however, was still full of water. This now began to rush out through the after-cabin windows and the port-holes on the main deck.

“Gradually, as the water flowed away, she rose higher and higher, till the deck itself came in sight.

“Then, by degrees, I began to realize how this had happened.

“The hatches were all securely battened down, and the decks were strong enough to resist the pressure of even the enormous mass of water thrown upon them. Consequently, the hold being free from water when the ship was suddenly overwhelmed by hundreds of tons of it, she was for the time pressed beneath the surface—weighed down, as it were. Her buoyancy, however,

soon asserted itself, and she gradually rose—shaking off the water from her deck as might a duck from its back, only not so easily.

“All this to a landsman may seem very strange, but in reality it is not so. A vessel is not like an open boat, which, when once submerged, must sink. A decked ship, provided the hatches are properly secured, and there is no aperture anywhere for the water to enter the hold, is like an empty barrel tightly bunged.

“The barrel may be forced under water and kept there by pressure, but the moment the pressure is removed, it rises again by its own buoyancy. It would be different, of course, if the bung were not in or the cask leaked. In that case, as the water entered, the cask would lose its buoyancy; and if the material of which it was composed were of greater specific gravity than water, it would ultimately sink.

“The hull of the *Phantom* was sound, as since she had been seen to at Sydney she had sprung no fresh leak; her hatches were securely battened down and covered with tarpaulins, so that no water having penetrated into the hold, no harm had been done to her buoyant powers.

By the time that her deck was quite free from water, the dark clouds had been swept away by the wind. The troubled sea grew calm, the sun once more shone out, gilding the spars and masts of the *Phantom* with his yellow light, and quickly, by his heat, evaporating the water and drying the wet deck. I looked beneath me with awe and a faintness at heart. The tremendous rush of water had swept the deck of all movable articles, and had torn many which had been secured from their lashings. The water-casks had been broken adrift and washed away by the terrible flood; the cabin bulk-head had been broken through, and the mass of water tearing through the cuddy had completely gutted it, carrying table, crockery, seats, and everything with it in its onward course out through the large after-cabin windows.

The vessel had been completely gutted—the decks as bare as when she was built.

But what of the crew—of captain, officers, and men?

A feeling of terrible desolation stole over me as I contemplated the deserted deck—a few minutes previously thronged by stalwart men.

Now, all were swept away—not a trace, not a vestige remained: and I, a lad of sixteen, found myself the sole survivor of the whole crew—the one living being on board the ship *Phantom*, tossing about at the mercy of winds and waves in the Indian Ocean! Tremblingly, with faltering step, blanched cheek, and haggard look, I clambered out of the top and proceeded to descend the rigging; and soon my foot trod the deck of the all but deserted ship.

I looked around and could scarcely realize the truth in all its naked terror.

The decks were white, clean, and spotless, from the terrible scouring they had undergone. The paint-work had been scrubbed thoroughly clean by the action of the water. I went aft into the cabin and looked round on the scene of ruin. Then I went to the fore-castle, took off the scuttle which covered the little hatch, and descended.

The well-known place was the same as usual. There were the sailors' bunks and chests; there hung the clothes and other belongings of the men; there lay the mess utensils in an empty bunk; there swung the oil lamp from a beam overhead.

Then a feeling of utter and terrible desolation burst on my mind. My overwrought mind gave way. I felt faint and giddy, and with a gasping cry fell senseless on the deck.

CHAPTER XIV.

ALONE ON THE OCEAN!

SUCH were the first words I uttered when, after recovering from my swoon, I crawled on deck and looked around me.

It was night.

There was a bright moon, which bathed the whole expanse of sea in silvery light. The vessel had not yet become dry after the tremendous immersion she had undergone, and a damp mist seemed to hang about her.

I looked aloft. The running rigging and sails hung in confused bights, and on the decks the ends of the running rigging lay about like long snakes, all pointing aft. The rigging on the main and mizen masts was in a much worse plight than that on the foremast, as the bulk of the mass of water had struck the vessel from amidships to the mizenmast. It was to this I owed my escape, and to the fact of being aloft at the time of the catastrophe.

The maintop-gallant-yard was broken in the slings and from the masthead. The mizentop-mast had been broken shortly above the cap, and the wreck hung down over the poop.

Altogether, the vessel in that moonlight presented a dilapidated and deserted appearance painful to behold.

The sails had been all clewed up, but not furled; and as the rush of the water had broken many of the clew-lines, bow-lines, &c., and torn the canvas in many places, the sails hung entangled with the running rigging in hopeless confusion.

The wreck of the foretop-gallant-mast, with the two yards, lay across the forecastle, partly overboard; and, altogether, such a scene of utter and hopeless chaos it would be difficult to conceive.

A gentle breeze was blowing, and by reason of there being more gear forward than aft, by reason of the loss of the mizentop-mast, the vessel was heading pretty nearly SE. before the wind. Looking over the side, I could see that she was going slowly through the water at the rate of a knot or a knot and a half an hour. I went on to the quarter-deck, and picking my way among the broken spars and rigging which strewn the deck, reached the wheel. In a few minutes I discovered that the vessel answered to her helm—that is to say, I could cause her head to vary two, or at most three points to port or starboard—not more, because of the excess of rigging and sail forward.

The moon was now getting low down towards the horizon, and as the sky was fast clouding over, it seemed that I should soon be in utter darkness.

The thought was to me full of horror, and as the

light gradually faded away, a superstitious terror seized me. I fancied I could see the ghosts of the drowned men flitting about the deck; and though I knew there was the means of procuring a light in the fore-castle, I could not prevail on myself for a long time to descend into the dark place, so crowded with reminiscences of my lost shipmates.

At last, however, my dislike of being left in darkness on deck got the better, in a measure, of my superstitious fears.

Descending the ladder, I groped my way to where I knew my chest was. Having found it, I opened it, and began to search for some matches which I knew I had somewhere. The light was very, very feeble, and in that small hole what little there was did not enable me to see anything distinctly.

Suddenly looking up, however, my eye fell on a figure behind the ladder under the scuttle. I could just make out it wore a jacket and sou-wester, and was moving slowly to and fro in a monotonous manner—as though wearily rocking itself. I waited to see no more, but with a scream of terror sprang up the ladder and dashed on deck.

I rushed aft, in my abject dread falling several times over spars and ropes in my frantic haste to get right aft and put the whole length of the ship between me and the apparition. This conduct may seem to the reader of this record (if, indeed, alas! it ever falls into civilized hands) as pusillanimous and foolish in the extreme. But then allowance should be made for my lonely, desolate condition—the terrible excitement and agony of mind I had already experienced, which had, I do verily believe, partially unbihnged my reason.

All night long I remained close to the taffrail, my morbid fancy peopling the waist and forepart of the vessel with the ghosts of my lost shipmates. I know not how the time passed. I took no notice; but at last, after many hours of weary misery, exhausted nature gave in, and I sank into a deep and dreamless sleep.

AUGUST 26, '54.—When I awoke, the sun was shining

brightly, and I guessed it to be about two bells in the forenoon watch (nine o'clock).

For a moment or two I gazed about me in a state of utter bewilderment. I looked along the deserted deck, all strewn with rigging and broken spars, and wondered where the water was. But soon memory came to my aid, and as I realized that all was not a dreadful dream, I burst into tears.

This may seem weak and childish, but it should be remembered I was but a lad; and surely no sailor-boy was ever in such desolate, almost hopeless condition.

After a while I collected my scattered faculties, and could not see as to what I should do.

First, I knelt down by the binnacle, and in a fervent prayer to the Most High, begged for help and guidance, and a safe deliverance out of this my desperate peril.

This done, I rose comforted and refreshed, as might a weary, thirsty traveller in the desert by a drink from a well of pure water; my heart melted, my spirits rose, I felt new life and new energy infused into my body.

A reaction had taken place, as is generally the case, I think. When a man or boy has any courage at all, it is seldom that a fit of despondency lasts long; and, in good sooth, I do think that in my dreadful position I might even be excused for utterly despairing.

After taking long and earnest counsel with myself, I went down into the cabin, and finding the British ensign in the signal-locker, which fortunately was safe, I took it aloft, affixed it to the foretopmast-head, union downwards, as a signal of distress to any ship that might happily descry me.

It was now dead calm again, so I extended the flag by fastening the clews on canvas to one of the shrouds. I could do no more in that way, so descended, and proceeded to make the best of the situation.

The cook-house, with coppers, boilers, fire-grates, and everything, was destroyed.

Fortunately, as I remembered, there was a small stove down the fore-castle, by means of which the crew could keep a fire if it should be intensely cold.

I descended for this, and was now able to smile at my folly of the night before, at being frightened at what I supposed a ghost, but proved to be nothing more than a sailor's oil jacket and sou'-wester, which, having just been repainted, he had hung up behind the ladder to dry, the arms extended by means of a broomstick, and the sou'-wester on top giving it the appearance of a figure as it swung to and fro.

I got the stove on deck, and dragging it into the cabin, proceeded to light a fire.

I found some coal, of which there was more than a hundred tons on board, and as there was plenty of dry splintered wood, soon succeeded in lighting a fire. Then I opened the door of the steward's pantry, a small cabin on the starboard side, which had not been burst open by the submersion of the vessel, though of course it had been filled with water.

Here everything was in the utmost confusion. The floor was strewn with broken crockery, plate, stores, and articles of all descriptions, which had been washed or thrown from the shelves. Of course the stores, such as tea, sugar, coffee, &c., were all spoiled, but I had little difficulty in finding a small kettle, a tin pannikin, knives, forks, some unbroken plates, and all the articles for a meal, except only food. This, however, did not trouble me, as I felt pretty sure that there was an abundance down the store-room, or lazaretto, which was situate in the after-hold, below the stern-cabins. I knew, too, where in the main-hold were tin water-casks, for those on deck had been washed away. Besides these, there was a large iron tank of water, so that I was in no danger of perishing from thirst.

The small stove I had taken from the fore-castle I now placed against the mizenmast in the cabin, so that the smoke might ascend through the skylight, which of course was entirely destroyed.

The fire burnt bright and clear, and so soon as I could procure water and food, I hoped quickly to enjoy an excellent breakfast.

My next task was to take one of the main hatches off. This, single-handed, was no easy matter, as the

hatches were heavy, and if I was not careful, I might let it fall down the hold, in which case I should have trouble in getting it up again.

I managed it in this way: I went aloft on the main-yard, unbent one of the mainsail ~~top~~-lines from the sail, and sent the end down. This I attached to the handle of one of the hatches (after having taken off the tarpaulin and tar, of course), and then commenced to haul on the standing part, and in that manner without much difficulty took the hatch off. I now took a bucket and went down into the main-hold. I had to come up again, however, for I had forgotten to bring anything to broach the water-cask with. The carpenter's tool-chest was, fortunately, in the lower fore-castle, as he had placed it there temporarily while his own berth in the deck-house was being caulked; for it leaked, and the damp rusted his tools. This was very fortunate, as the deck-house and all its contents were washed away. Armed with the necessary tools, I went down the hold, smashed a cask, and having filled a bucket, took a look around.

The between-decks had not very much cargo, as the vessel was large and the lower hold capacious. There was at all events abundant space about the main hatch to move about it.

Forward were a number of cases, barrels, and bales, the contents of which I intended to investigate at a fitting opportunity. Aft, by the mainmast, was the large iron water-tank; on either side was a water-cask, and in front of the iron tank the agricultural steam-engine I have before spoken of. It was covered up with a tarpaulin, and looked a strange object, like a gigantic animal with a chimney in place of head.

I deferred any further investigation till after breakfast, and going on deck, hauled the bucket up after me, and filling the kettle placed it on the stove.

I then got the fore-castle lamp and descended into the lazaretto in search of what I could find. I was not unsuccessful, as I soon discovered a case of wine, a bag of biscuits, and some York hams.

Here was breakfast, at all events, and I hastened

up into the cabin and proceeded to prepare the meal. A bag of coffee and another of sugar I also discovered, so that I was all right for breakfast. The coffee was neither roasted nor ground, but I found the coffee-mill in the steward's pantry, and fixed it to the mizenmast. Then I proceeded to roast the berries by putting them in an iron pot I found, which latter I placed on the stove, in which there was a roaring fire, shaking the green coffee about the while, in order that it might not burn. The water being boiling, I soon made a can, and next proceeded to broil a rasher of ham, and in the course of an hour sat down on the deck to an excellent breakfast. This over, I cleared away, put things straight in the steward's cabin, and then went on deck again.

Standing on the break of the poop, I surveyed the scene with strange feelings of awe and uncertainty.

What was to be done? It was again a dead calm, or nearly so, though fortunately, the sky being overcast, it was not so intensely hot.

First of all, naturally enough, I looked around in the sea and horizon, in the hope of descriing a sail. But no such welcome sight met my anxious gaze, and with a sigh I turned my regard on the vessel herself. Alow and aloft all was in a fearful state, the rigging of the fallen spars hanging in loops and all sorts of entanglements; the sails clewed up, but not furled, in bights under the yards; the canvas in many places torn.

On deck a scene of equal confusion presented itself. Although all movable articles had been swept away, spars and rigging and ropes, which were attached to the masts still standing, lay about, and caused a very different appearance from that the trim vessel presented on the preceding morning, before I had made up my mind to set to work and make the best of my situation. "Doubtless," I said to myself, "a vessel will fall in with the ship in a few days, and a crew will be put on board. What a valuable haul they will get in the shape of salvage!"

It now occurred to me that though it was calm now, it might not always continue to be so; that a storm might arise, in which case, the dilapidated con-

dition of the vessel aloft, the rigging all in disorder, the sails hanging loose, it would be source of danger.

So I resolved to put things straight, and to begin with, set to work to clear up the deck. Taking a hatchet, I commenced aft, and cutting all the ropes and rigging, which were hopelessly entangled, proceeded to coil them up. As for the broken spars, I hauled such as I could to the side, and there secured them. By noon I had cleared the deck as far forward as the mainmast, and soon felt the necessity of rest, and began to think about dinner.

It is no less strange than true, that no matter how desperate the circumstances one may be placed in—how great were the cause for sorrow, man can always eat.

Before preparing food for dinner, however, I thought that I had not made a search in the captain's cabin. It was the hope of finding a telescope, with which I might search the horizon for a ship, which put this idea in my head; and forthwith I proceeded to carry it out. I found everything in the captain's cabin, as in the steward's pantry, in a state of great disorder. Of course the water had full possession, and the contents were soaked through and scattered in every direction. Books, clothing, charts—all lay about damaged or destroyed. Proceeding to search his chest and lockers, I found that here things were in better order—though of course wetted, they were not destroyed. In the chest I found a sextant and small compass, pocket barometer, and chronometer. The latter had stopped, of course, though, like the large chronometer, not destroyed. These latter had been washed from their places and lay hopelessly injured on the deck.

It was a telescope, however, that I wanted, and having found this, I hastened to the foretopmast-yard, and carefully scanned the horizon. But no welcome sail gladdened my eyes; nothing but sea and sky—sky and sea.

With a sad heart I descended and proceeded to the cabin, where I made a dinner off part of a tin of preserved meat and biscuits, washed down by a pot of tea.

Then I resumed work, and proceeded to finish

clearing up the deck. It took me all the rest of the day to do this, and though I should have liked to have secured the sails, I felt much tired, and determined to leave that till the morrow. Shortly before sunset I again went aloft, and looked out for a sail, but with the same ill success. Then having trimmed two lamps, one for the cabin and one for the fore-castle, I sadly paced the deck, and thought over my sad fate, and what would probably be the end of this strange adventure.

I thought of Robinson Crusoe, and I remember I smiled sadly as I thought of myself as the ocean Crusoe. Thinking of this great boy's hero of fiction, I called to mind how he kept count of the days by cutting notches on a post, and taking up the axe, I made a long nick in the fore-mast, about two feet from the deck.

"This is my first day alone on the ocean," I said to myself; "I will cut a notch for every day I spend alone on board the *Phantom*."

I wonder how many

It was only a light foolish fancy, for I had no need for it—like the castaway of the island—having writing materials, paper, a journal, and books.

After supper, which consisted of the remainder of the can of preserved meat, biscuits, and tea, as before, I lighted the fore-castle lamp, and getting out my log, proceeded to enter therein a full account of the catastrophe to the crew, and my own miraculous preservation. From that which I wrote on this the first evening of my being a lonely castaway, this chapter has been compiled.

Next I put my chart out, and proceeded to mark the spot where I thought the vessel now was. I pricked her off as in lat. and long. certainly not far from the ordinary track of ships, though perhaps a little too much to the eastward.

However, I felt not much uneasiness as to the result. It might be days, or a week or two even, but before very long I was certain to be rescued.

Thus taking comfort to my breast, I took a farewell look round the deck and sea, and having said my prayers, turned into my bunk in tolerable spirits. Thus ended my first day on the sea—alone on the ocean.

CHAPTER XV.

FEARS AND HOPES.

AUGUST 27th.—The sun rose clear and bright—a light breeze from the S.E. rippled the sea. Barometer 29.02.

I slept soundly, and awoke just at sunrise, which I for the first time witnessed since the disaster. After getting breakfast I proceeded aloft with a hatchet and knife and marlinspike, and set to work clearing away the wreck. By four bells all the top-hamper was on deck, as I had been vigorously cutting and slashing away with axe and knife; I then descended and commenced clearing off from the deck what had come down from aloft. At about seven bells (half-past eleven—my watch was still going) I got my quadrant and proceeded to watch for the sun's attaining the meridian, in order to get the latitude exactly. I succeeded, and found I was nearer the equator than I had supposed, thinking that we had crossed it several days before the catastrophe; cut another notch in the foremast, and then went to dinner; after this went aloft and had a long and steady look round for a sail—no such luck. The day was intensely hot, though fortunately there was a light breeze from the west; kept gently at work clearing the remains of the wreck of top-gallant-masts, &c., from the deck; finished this at about four bells in the first dog-watch. Finding that the barometer was falling, and that banks of clouds were gathering in the nor'-west, I got anxious about the sails, which were not furled, but hanging in the buntlines, &c., under the yards. If a breeze came they must inevitably be blown loose; and as I cannot possibly handle the ship single-handed, she may be thrown on her beam ends, or, being taken aback, go down stern foremost under pressure of the canvas; but how to furl single-handed great heavy sails, which ordinarily took at least a dozen strong men, was to me for a long time a problem. I determined, however, that something should be done, and hit upon a plan which I thought might prove to be successful. I got a quantity

of small rope—any odds and ends, so that each piece was about six fathoms long, would do—and then I commenced with the foresail. I passed it right round the sail and yard, nearly at the yardarm, and then, unbending one of the buntlines, attached this to it. The part of the buntline which came down on deck I took to a small hand-winch in the rail, and with this purchase I contrived to haul that part of the sail up round the yard. This done, I went on the yard, made the line fast, and passing another rope round yard and sail, farther into the slings of the yard, repeated the process. In about four hours I had the foresail tolerably well secured.

This was short work, but it was satisfactory to know that I could do something towards preparing for heavy weather.

That day passed and no sail appeared in sight. This, the second whole day since the disaster, passed off quietly; nothing in sight but sea and sky.

AUGUST 28, 29, 30, 31.—I will pass over these four days, during which I kept to work securing the sails and making all as snug as possible. By the 1st of September this had been accomplished; and the sails are now bound to the yards, in a rude clumsy way certainly, but still effectually. A week has now passed since the accident. I find the monotony fearful, and but for the occupation for my mind the work of securing the sails gives me, I should grow despondent.

Every day, two or three times at least, I went to the foretopsail-yard, and, with the captain's spy-glass, anxiously swept the horizon. It now began to dawn upon my mind that it might be weeks—months even—before a vessel came in sight; and, with a shudder, I thought—suppose one never comes, what a dreadful fate will mine be! I tried to dismiss this dismal foreboding from my mind, but was not entirely successful. At all events, I had abundance of provisions and water, enough to last for years; and, of course, I should be rescued before that time had elapsed. I laughed at my own folly in thinking of years, and came down from aloft.

The next thing I set about doing was repairing the

after-cabin windows and fitting fresh strong shutters or dead-lights. I might here encounter a gale, and in such case, of course, it would be awkward, even dangerous, to have seas coming in and sweeping the deck. I got the tools from the carpenter's chest, and forthwith set to work. There was plenty of timber to work on, and in three days I had made some rough but strong shutters. While I was about it, I thought I might replace the cabin table, which had been swept away, by another one, which I did, and also a bench; so that now I sat down to my meals in a civilized fashion.

Another week passed without anything important occurring.

SEPTEMBER 8.—This day makes a fortnight since all my shipmates were swept away at one fell swoop. I now began to get really anxious, especially as I discovered that the vessel was slowly drifting to the northward, at the rate of about five miles a day. This I discovered by taking the meridian altitude of the sun every day, and then calculating the latitude.

Now what little bits of breeze we had had been principally from the west and north-west. Hence I feared that the ship was drifting to the east and south-east, which would take her farther away from the ordinary track of vessels, and render my chance of being rescued more precarious.

I had carefully calculated the proper course to be steered if the desired wind would only come. It was a south or south-easterly breeze I wanted, and should one spring up I thought about loosing some of the sails, and steering her on the right course.

Hitherto there had been no wind at all worth speaking of. It was, therefore, with great delight that on the eighteenth day of my solitude, on going on deck in the morning, I noticed clouds banking up to the southward, and saw a dark line on the surface of the sea some miles away. This I knew was the ripple on the water caused by wind. In half an hour I felt the first gentle air on my cheek, and hastened to get breakfast, resolved, if it seemed likely to last steady, to loose the foretop-sail, and, though of course it was utterly impossible for

me to hoist the ponderous yard, yet with that sail loosed, even with the yard on the cap and the foresail, she might make very good heading with the wind astern, or slightly on either quarter.

I went down below to get some water from the cask I had broached, and I observed with some surprise that it was half empty. True, it had not been nearly full when I first broached it, but I had not thought I had consumed such a quantity. I remembered now, however, that besides what I drank and used for cooking, I had not been sparing of it for washing purposes, and for that purpose alone had taken a bucketful every morning.

However, I said to myself, it is a matter of no moment—there is another cask full, besides the big tank, which holds as much as fifty casks.

Somehow or other, though, I felt a kind of compunction at my extravagance in regard to water, and a silent voice seemed to whisper to me—Tom Holt, you may want that fresh water you wasted ere you are out of this adventure.

I got breakfast, and then went on deck.

The breeze had come, and was now blowing steadily and briskly from S.S.W.

Nothing could be better, and I felt inclined to go aloft at once, and loose the foretopsail. Before doing so, however, I went below into the cabin, and there, on a table of my own construction, I spread forth my own chart carefully: silently, and not without some pride, I marked off her course for Calcutta.

"Who knows," I said to myself, "if the breeze should happen to last and keep steadily where it is, I may even succeed in navigating the vessel to her destined port? That would, indeed, be glorious! How I should be talked of and praised!"—my heart beating high with hope at this wild idea as I went on deck.

The wind still kept steady, so without any more hesitation I went aloft to loose the foretopsail.

I felt some little compunction at casting off the ropes, with which I had, after so much toil and trouble, bound up the sail to the yard.

One by one I cast them off, and having previously let

go the buntlines, beachlines, and clewlines, the heavy sail fell flapping down, and bellied out to the favouring gale.

I had previously lashed the helm amidships, and now observed, that though, of course, with no helmsman, she gained three or four points either way, she did it pretty equally, and showed no inclination to come up to the wind.

Thus, though she would, as sailors say, make a good many W's in the water, she would, on the whole, make good the right course.

I hastened down, and proceeded to sheet home the topsail, a job which occupied me half an hour; and even then, though I got a watch-tack on and took the full to the winch, I could not get the sheet right home. As to hoisting the yard, I did not attempt that, as I considered it quite impossible to succeed.

After I had done this I went to the wheel, and, placing the small compass at my feet (the binnacle compass had been swept away), proceeded to steer the ship in her course. The breeze freshened for about an hour, and then kept steady. Looking over the side at the foam and froth as the vessel glided by it, I reckoned that she was going over four knots an hour. This would give about a hundred knots a day, and a week of such a wind would take the vessel seven or eight degrees north of the equator, and clear of the doldrums. I thought about loosing the foresail at one time, but she glided along so smoothly and pleasantly, and the breeze was so fresh and steady, that I could not find it in my heart to leave the helm.

I stuck at my post all day, only leaving once to get a drink of water. As for dinner, I resolved to put that off till evening, when I could take two meals in one.

At the end of the first dog-watch, I lashed the helm amidships in order to go and prepare some tea, and put something on the fire for supper.

I waited a bit first to see how the vessel would go on without a helmsman, and found to my satisfaction that, as before, she kept a tolerable course.

Nevertheless, I hastened back to my post as soon as I could, after a hasty supper, in high spirits, full of hope and confidence.

The breeze kept steady all night—if anything increasing a little in strength. At one time, I think, she must have been going nearly six knots an hour. This, with only a foretopsail, and that not hoisted, was really first-rate. I stood at the wheel all night, and did not lie down till nearly daylight; and then I wrapped myself in a blanket and took up my position close to the compass. I only dozed off for half an hour or so, and every time I woke I saw, to my intense satisfaction, that the wind kept steady, and that the vessel really seemed to get on nearly as well without as with me.

Towards sunrise, however, I fell into a sound sleep, and did not wake for two hours.

When I rose to my feet I found that the vessel was rolling considerably, and that there was a considerable sea running.

The day was beautifully fine, however, and there was not the least appearance of heavy weather in store; so in place of being dispirited, I felt exhilarated and in high spirits. I was sanguine enough actually to hope, and think it possible too, that this breeze might last a week or two, or perhaps a month, and that I might succeed in navigating the vessel to the Sand Heads, at the mouth of the Hooghly, myself, unaided.

At noon I took the sun, and found to my delight, in calculating it up, that we had crossed, and were now some distance north of, the equator. "Two days more," I cried, enthusiastically, "and we shall be out of the doldrums—no more calms—no more light ruffling winds and cat's-paws!"

For dinner that day I contented myself with biscuit and cheese and a glass of wine, of which latter there was a couple of dozen bottles on board.

The breeze held all that afternoon, and only slackened slightly towards midnight. The sea, however, had risen considerably, and the vessel now rolled heavily, not having sufficient sail to steady her. At six bells, feeling tired out, I lay down for a time, having first satisfied

myself by experiment that she would not broach to with the helm lashed nearly amidships.

I was startled about eight bells by a noise—a loud sonorous bang—a sound like that of a heavy blow on a hard metallic substance—followed by a second but lesser noise. I was not asleep, only just lying with my eyes closed in a heavy state.

Vainly I puzzled over the problem as to what it could be. I felt certain it could not be fancy, and was annoyed and disquieted at not being able to account for it. I lashed the wheel and went forward, but could see nothing. A strange inquietude took possession of me; my high spirits seemed to desert me all at once; and just at this time the wind fell, and by sunrise it was almost a dead calm. Somehow or another I could not help saying to myself, “Misfortunes never come alone;” and I felt inwardly sure that some other disaster was in store besides the falling of the wind.

I felt an inward conviction, a sort of presentiment, that the mysterious noise boded some evil.

CHAPTER XVI.

I BECOME A DISTILLER.

THIS calm—so unexpected, almost sudden, indeed—threw a damp on my spirits. I knew that the vessel was not yet clear of that wearisome belt of calms and ruffling winds on either side of the line, in which well-manned vessels, with plenty of light canvas to enable them to take advantage of every breath of air, had been detained, unable to break through the charm, for many weeks.

There being no wind, it was of course useless for me to remain any longer at the helm; so I left it and walked forward. The vessel, no longer having headway, swung broadside on to the sea, and then she commenced rolling more than ever, there not being a breath of wind to steady her. All at once I heard a loud *thump*—then

another—and then the same sonorous bang I had heard before.

I hesitated for a minute, and then, a light breaking in on me, I cried—"Something has broken adrift in the hold; the water-cask, I do believe!"

I always talked aloud now, spoke my thoughts even, and found this some relief to the dreadful silence and solitude.

I quickly took off the hatch and went down into the hold.

It was as I thought; one of the water-casks had broken from its lashings, and was careering about the place like a mad bull—thumping from side to side as the vessel rolled—bumping and jumping in a manner not at all pleasant, considering that it might perchance take a jump and knock me down. I was just considering how I could best secure the cask when, happening to cast my eyes on the deck at my feet, I saw that it was *wet*.

There had been no rain, and she had shipped no seas; besides, if she had, that would not account for it, as I had taken the precaution to place the tarpaulin over the hatch. "Then," said I to myself, "she must have sprung a leak above the water-line, and taken in water when she rolled." But, though I looked carefully, I could see no sign of such a leak, and she rolled now as badly as ever. If there were a leak it must be a considerable one, as I saw by the appearance of the deck that it had been thoroughly saturated, so there must have been a very considerable quantity of water. It was some time before I could solve the riddle. Accidentally my glance fell upon the great iron tank, and there, close to the bottom, I saw an indentation and a hole, through which a small quantity of water still trickled as the vessel rolled that way.

Instantly I guessed the truth, and turned my attention to the two water-casks—the only two on board. The one that had broken adrift was, I knew, empty—that I could tell by the sound. Then I ran to the other one, and a groan of despair broke from me as I saw that this one also had been stove in, probably by the other one coming into collision with it.

Now I understood the meaning of the mysterious sound which had startled me in the night. The lashings of the full cask were rotten—they had given way, and the cask had then rolled heavily against the iron tank, in which it had knocked a hole low enough down to let out all the water.

Not content with this mischief, but possessed, it would seem, by some demon inimical to me, it had come against the other cask, and stove that in also as well as itself.

This was a terrible disaster, and but that it was necessary to act, and that promptly, I could have thrown myself on the deck and wept.

I perceived, however, that there was still a little water in the cask, and quickly loosening the lashings, I turned it over slightly, so that the place where it was stove in should come to the top; then I went on deck, got buckets, and proceeded to see how much water I had left.

A small bucketful and a quarter—that was every drop of water on board the *Phantom*. That quantity in so hot a climate would not last more than a week; and if I did not procure more by that time, and no rescue came, why I might prepare myself for all the dreadful pangs of thirst.

Carefully I preserved what remained in stone jars, and took the precious fluid, more valuable now than molten gold, and placed them where they could not be broken. I now proceeded to make a thorough search in the store-room, in the forlorn hope that there might be a keg there; but it was not so. I found three cases of brandy, one of whisky, and a cask of rum—all rank poison to a thirsty man. There was, too, a case of fiery sherry, which was little better.

The only fluid I found which was of any service under the circumstances was three half-pint tins of preserved milk and two bottles of claret, all of which I carefully put on one side for future use.

Alas! what a change in my prospects now from what they were a few hours back. Then the vessel was running before a fine breeze on a course which must before

long bring her into the track of vessels homeward and outward bound. Then I had water enough to last me not for months only, but, used with caution, for years. Now I had barely enough for a fortnight, and again it was a dead calm. The sea gradually went down, and in a couple of days' time the *Phantom* lay like a log upon a sea of glass, looking like a painted ship upon a painted ocean.

Another week's calm—utter and deadly calm. My supply of water dwindles away day by day, just as the intense heat increases my desire to drink. I find, too, to my bitter grief, that the vessel is surely but slowly drifting back south towards the equator, so that she must be influenced by some current, as there has been no wind.

OCTOBER 10TH. — I have now been more than six weeks alone on this vessel, and have no more prospect of deliverance than on the first day; yes, I am wrong, I have a better prospect of deliverance, but by death—a horrible death by thirst. As I write this my throat and tongue are parched. I could drink a gallon of water, but I have only three pints left. The wine and the milk have not yet been touched. When this water is all gone they may perhaps keep me from perishing from thirst for three or perhaps four days—not more; four days of misery. I know not what to do. Shall I drink all the water—have one delicious draught, then tie a weight around my neck and jump overboard? I am sorely tempted to do so. Oh, the agonies of thirst! But I will strive to the last. I will pray for strength.

A day after I wrote the above extract a very remarkable circumstance happened. In the morning a very light shower of rain fell, and I was enabled to catch a few pints of water, and also relieve my burning thirst by sucking my wet shirt. After this I felt a little more easy both in body and mind—more hopeful, in fact. It was early in the afternoon, and I was sitting in what had been poor Captain ——'s cabin, turning over some books. Presently I came to a work on experimental chemistry, and glancing at it, became interested. I was reading about impure water, and how it might be puri-

fied by passing it through layers of gravel, charcoal, &c. Then came these words—"But for chemical purposes water is always purified by distillation. This, unless there is some more volatile subject in solution, renders it as pure as it is possible to obtain it. All mineral substances are left behind in this process, as indeed is most inorganic matter. Salt water becomes perfectly fresh, all the salt being left behind."

I put down the book, and thought for a time. I felt my face flush, and a burning thrill pass through my frame. A wild fervent hope, which amounted almost to an assured conviction, took possession of my mind. It was not by any process of reasoning that I arrived at the conclusion I did—that by the contrivance I had just been reading of I should obtain a supply of fresh water—but by a sort of intuition. The black clouds of despair were instantly rolled back by the bright light of hope, and, throwing down the book, I started to my feet, and cried aloud,—

"Saved! I can get water!"

As to how, in what exact manner, I did not know, and did not much trouble myself.

In a rough way I was acquainted with the principle of distillation. I knew that fire was applied to a vessel of water till steam was plentifully given off, and that this steam was conducted through long pipes, and cooled, when it would again assume the fluid form, minus all the earthly, mineral, and saline ingredients contained in the water.

I was so excited at the idea that for some time I was unable to collect my thoughts and calm myself sufficiently to devise means for carrying it into effect. In order, then, to get myself in fit order to devise and carry out a plan to construct a still, I walked along to and fro on the deck for some half-hour.

It was nearly a dead calm on the sea, which, but for the slow steady swell of the Pacific, would have been like a sheet of glass. At places, dark patches on the boundless expanse marked with a light "catpaw" ruffled the surface. Far as the eye could reach was the same monotonous vast plain of water, bounded by the horizon

and covered by the blue dome of the heavens, spotted with great masses of white clouds, which slowly and lazily moved from the west to the east.

As there seemed no prospect of any breeze, I had again hauled up the sails and secured them roughly to the yards, in the same manner as before. It was a work of great labour, but I felt more at my ease, and could sleep at night with a sense of greater security than if they had all been hanging loose, knowing, as I did, that if caught in a sudden squall or gale it would be impossible for me to do anything to secure them.

I took the meridian altitude of the sun and ascertained the latitude. I found that the vessel was drifting slowly but surely to the southward, and had too good grounds to fear that she was also going eastward through the influence of a slight but steady current.

This course was very prejudicial to the chance of falling in with a ship, as already I was too far east from the track of either outward or homeward-bound vessels. I was, I knew, in latitude 1 degree south of the equator, as nearly as possible, as I could ascertain that every day by the meridian altitude of the sun at noon. But as to longitude, I had no means of telling, as the ship's chronometers were rendered useless; and as to the small one I had found in the captain's chest, I did not know the rate of it, which would be absolutely indispensable to calculate the longitude thereby.

I had reason to believe, however, that the longitude was about 90 degrees east. This would place the ship about equidistant from the large island of Sumatra to the east and Ceylon to the north-west, each being between six and seven hundred miles off. Calcutta lay nearly due north, distant a little more than 24 degrees of latitude, between fourteen and fifteen hundred miles.

This, however, was only conjecture as to the longitude; but, under any circumstances, I could not have been more than a degree or two out in my reckoning.

It is true there are other methods of finding the longitude at sea besides by chronometer—by the sun and moon, or moon and stars (called a lunar observa-

tion)—but at the time, unfortunately, I was not sufficiently up in my navigation to work these out.

This afternoon I spent in devising means to construct a still. The first thing was an iron vessel of some kind, in which the water was to be heated. I succeeded in finding a large iron kettle with a spout and lid. The lid I securely fastened down and rendered air and steam-tight by means of white lead, of which there were several kegs for mixing paint.

This done, I placed the kettle on the top of the stove, having previously half filled it with salt water. Having made a fierce fire, I waited till the water should boil, which took place in about half an hour. The result was, that steam poured in a strong stream from the spout. The kettle could hold about six quarts of water, and being half full, there were three quarts. Now I knew that the whole of this three quarts would evaporate in steam, leaving the sea-salt and other matters behind. The steam was free from all salt, and if I could only condense it, I should have three quarts of fresh water, or nearly so, as the result of the operation.

But how was this condensation to be effected?

I again studied the chemical work, from which I had first derived the idea, and referring to the chapter on distillation, found that the process of condensation was effected by conducting the steam through a small metal pipe of considerable length, which was coiled in a tub or other vessel of cold water. At the bottom of this vessel the end of the metal tube protruded. This was the result: the steam went in at the top, and the cold water (constantly renewed) caused the hot steam within the tube to condense before the bottom of the tub was reached. All the steam was converted into water, which trickled from the end of the tube coming out of the lower end of the tub.

Now, having made myself master of the subject, the question was how to put my knowledge in to practice.

I had got a large kettle, and a tub could easily be arranged; but how to manage for metal tubing I did not know.

There was the steam pouring from the spout of the

kettle in a dense white cloud; all I had to do was to condense it, and lo! a constant supply of fresh water.

But how to condense it?—the metal tubing was wanting.

It struck me that there might be some among the cargo, and forthwith I set to work.

Procuring a large hammer, and what is called a "cold chisel," a piece of iron about half a pound in weight, chisel-pointed at one end, I went down the hold, taking a lantern with me, and proceeded to break open the cases of goods, in hopes of finding what I wanted.

I came on deck every hour or so, in order to see how affairs were—whether there was any appearance of a sail, wind, or rain.

OCTOBER 25TH.—A week has passed, and I have been blessed by several light showers, during which I collected more than a gallon of water. I have still three quarts of the precious fluid remaining, and have as yet only drunk one bottle of the wine, and have not touched any of the half-pint tins of preserved milk. During this last week I have opened nearly every case of goods in the hold, and also made a discovery, not of a pleasant nature.

It never occurred to me to sound the pump well, as I thought the vessel was tight. So she was, comparatively speaking; but even the best and soundest vessels always leak slightly. Two months had now passed since she had been pumped out, and the consequence was that there was four feet of water in her hold. I found it out on opening a case of goods deep down in the lower hold.

This was a startling and unpleasant discovery. It was true that there was no immediate danger; also, that there was no leak worthy of the name. The general oozing of water through the seams, which occurs even in the most sea-worthy and tight vessels, was sufficient to account for the water in the hold of the *Phantom*.

For, be it remembered, she had not been pumped out for more than two months.

There was no immediate danger, however, and I resolved, before endeavouring to pump the sea water *out* of the vessel, to get some fresh water *in*.

My exploration among the cargo in the hold had not proved successful in one respect—that I had not been able to find any metal tubing, through which to conduct and condense the steam.

But I had discovered a whole lot of things which might, and probably would, some day prove very useful—that is, if I could only succeed in procuring enough fresh water to satisfy nature and prolong my singular life on board my floating prison.

The great majority of the cases I broke open contained linen, cotton, and silk manufactured goods. I came across several lots of jewellery and a box of watches. There were fancy articles of all kinds; millinery of the latest mode for Calcutta ladies; French boots and gloves, ribbons, books, stationery, dressing-cases, and articles of luxury too numerous to mention. Then I came to a lot of cases containing preserved provisions, then some hundreds of York hams, and forty or fifty cases of Cognac brandy. Bales of grey shirting, a quantity of cloth, alpaca, and calico next came under my notice. Then there was more brandy, and a great quantity of pickles and jams.

I was in hope that in the course of my explorations I should have come across some barrels or cases of bottled ale or stout; but I had no such good fortune.

On the fourth day, I came to some cases of hardware, ironmongery, crockery, nails, tools, and so on.

All this while I had been working from the main hatch forward, and had now arrived at the foremast.

Finding all my efforts unsuccessful in finding either drinkables or anything which would serve for metal tubing for my proposed still, I gave up in that direction and commenced to work aft. My proceedings would doubtless have appeared extremely wasteful to a looker-on, and have filled the owner of the goods and the consignee with horror.

So soon as I had broken open a case by prizing off the top or one of the sides with cold chisel or crowbar, I used, after having ascertained what was inside, to drag out the contents and throw them behind me in utter disregard of the value of the articles; then I used to

proceed to demolish the case by smashing it up with the small crowbar I carried. The wood I collected and tied in bundles for burning; this done I used to break open the next case and serve it and contents in a similar manner. Then I would proceed to operate on those on either side, till, as I worked on, I cleared a large open space, which every hour lengthened and widened.

On the sixth day, I came to a number of small boxes bound with iron and sealed. At once I knew, by the weight of these, and the precautions taken to secure them, that they contained gold. Each one had Australian sovereigns to the value of £1,000 sterling; and I smiled as I thought of myself absolute possessor of such vast wealth, which was yet all the while useless to me. I would willingly have given the lot for a small cask of water.

With regard to this necessary fluid, I had been tolerably fortunate; for although a week had elapsed since I last took account, my stock had not much diminished, and I had studiously avoided tasting the claret or the six little tins of preserved milk; this was by reason of some rain showers, which, though of short duration, were tolerably heavy, and I was thereby enabled to save a gallon or so.

The weather during the last week has been much the same—intensely hot—dead calms, varied by occasional light breezes and catspaws.

I find that the ship has drifted two degrees south of the equator, and still fear that she is also making easterly; but in the lack of chronometers, and with my imperfect knowledge of navigation, I cannot tell the longitude.

NOVEMBER 1st.—I have now thoroughly ransacked the hold, but have not succeeded in finding anything which can serve for the metal tube or worm of the still I wish to construct: it is very disheartening.

The work is very hard, and to toil all day in the hot close hold on a short allowance of water is enough to wear out even the strongest frame: thank heaven my constitution is a strong one, or I must long since have succumbed.

I have found nearly everything one could think of

except what I want. Yesterday I came upon a quantity of cases containing fire-arms—rifles, fowling-pieces, revolvers, pistols—with a number of little kegs containing loose powder and bullets, and made cartridges to fit; also several cases of army regulation swords and cavalry sabres, broad axes for timber felling, and knives and cutlery in abundance.

I fancy that, failing being picked up by a vessel, if the ship would only drift ashore, I could, with the means at my command, make myself very comfortable, and give a good account of any savages who might dare to attack me; for I had a superabundance of arms, ammunition, and provisions. Robinson Crusoe was not half so well provided as I am—with this exception, that he was cast on a fertile island, where there was abundance of water, whilst I am adrift on the ocean with only a gallon.

In the course of my search, too, I came upon the coal, of which the ship had a large quantity stored low down. This was a useful discovery, as my supply for the store was running short. I had found a cask full in the lazaretto, which the steward had caused to be put there for use in the cuddy, if necessary. One of the cases I broke open contained a powerful galvanic battery or electrical machine, and a quantity of bottles, chemicals, and apparatus. All these I carefully transferred to the cabin. I had hoped that I might find amongst the apparatus the necessaries for making a small still; but in this I was disappointed. However, there was a retort and reservoir, and with these I resolved to attempt distilling water. A retort, as most know, is a hollow glass bulb with a beak to it. In this case the bulb would hold about half a pint of water when quite full. It not being possible, however, to fill it, in practice it would scarcely take more than a quarter of a pint.

The beak was about a foot long, and the receiver would hold about half a pint of water.

The receiver was merely a hollow glass globe, with a very short beak or mouth, into which the beak of the retort was to be inserted when the apparatus was to be used. I found a retort-holder and a spirit lamp, and at once proceeded to work, anxious to satisfy myself by

actual experiment whether it was indeed possible to distil fresh water from salt. Of course I had no reason to doubt the accuracy of the learned book from which I had got the information; and besides, I knew in a general way that disillation should effect this. Still, however, I could not put entire faith in theory, and wanted to be convinced by practical experience. Having filled the bulb of the retort rather more than half full of water, I placed it in the retort-holder, at a height about eight inches from the table. Beneath it I put the spirit lamp, and lighted it. The flame reached up to the globe, half full of salt water, and spread itself over the bottom. Meanwhile I applied wet rags round the beak of the retort, and carefully covered with yarn the place where the beak entered the receiver. On the receiver I also placed wet rags; and by the time I had finished all these arrangements the water was nearly boiling, and steam began to rise in the bulb and pass down the neck, where it was quickly condensed. Shortly, the salt water boiled fast, and a continuous jet of steam passed down the beak and into the receiver. Some steam was lost, finding its way out at the junction of the retort and receiver, by reason of its not being condensed fast enough. I now commenced to pour cold water from a bucket by my side on to the neck of the retort and the receiver. This had the effect of cooling the glass, and caused the steam to condense rapidly. In about an hour from the commencement of this my first experiment in distillation, the retort was empty of water, there remaining behind only a gritty saline residue.

The receiver contained about a gill of fluid, the rest having been wasted by the escape of steam. With trembling hand I withdrew the beak of the retort, and poured the liquid into a tin pannikin.

Then I tasted it, and the next moment, with one gulp, swallowed it.

It was sweet fresh water, as pure and delightful as any I had every drunk.

In this I saw foreshadowed my future success.

CHAPTER XVII.

A LUCKY DREAM.

I **FELT** that my cheeks burned, and that my eyes gleamed with joyous triumph at this success, small as it was. I felt as though new energy were instilled into my nerves, new blood into my veins, fresh courage into my heart.

It seemed to me that the success of this experiment exorcised for ever the demon thirst. Let the worst come to the worst, I should not perish by the slow and agonizing tortures of thirst.

By neglecting everything else, and keeping at work at the little apparatus all day, I should, at any rate, be able to distil a couple of pints of fresh water; and this would keep the twin-sister wolf of famine from the door.

But such was not my intention. I determined to construct a proper still, so that I could in a day distil even several gallons, which would give me leisure to attend to other things, that of pumping out the hold in particular—a matter of great importance.

I had now spent a whole week rummaging about the hold, during which time the ship had drifted and tossed in the slow solemn swell as she pleased. Not that I could have done much to guide her course, as the whole time there was a succession of calms, varied only by light airs, which did not last more than an hour or two.

Perhaps, had I not been so bent on gaining the power to supply myself almost *ad libitum* with fresh water, I might have endeavoured to rig some kind of a light mast aft, so that the vessel might be able to hold her wind.

That, however, was now an object far in the future. First, I had to make my still—on that I was determined—and then came the laborious and tedious task of freeing the hold from water. How I was going to do it I could not for the life of me tell, but I felt confident that when the time came, I should devise some means.

It may seem strange, but it is nevertheless true, that I had now become resigned to my fate, and actually scarcely hoped for a speedy release from solitary confinement in this my floating gaol.

At all events, I determined to be prepared for a long, perilous, and tedious cruise. For aught I could tell, I might be tossed about, the sport of winds and waves, for months—ay, who could say no?—years. Bearing this in mind, looking steadily at the darkest side of my prospects, I prepared to make a stout fight with cruel fortune; and if I were destined to be thus a solitary waif on the ocean for years, to take measures for my subsistence, comfort, and, above all, ultimate escape, and return to old England and the *Haven of Rest*. That afternoon there came a welcome shower, only a slight one, but nevertheless I managed to get therefrom three pints of water.

I drank a quart—a piece of reckless extravagance it might seem; but my excuse is that I was in high spirits, and felt confident I should soon be able to indulge myself to my heart's content.

I wished to devote the rest of that day to planning and devising what to do, and I felt that I could not lend all my mind to the task whilst tormented by thirst.

The decks were covered fore and aft with white calico, and I had spread many yards in the rigging, in order that when a shower of rain fell they might get saturated, on which I would hasten to squeeze the wet cotton and extract the water. This was the plan I uniformly adopted, after I had broken open the cases and obtained such a quantity of calico.

The day had not been so sultry as those preceding it, although it was a dead calm, for the sky was overcast, and the fierce sun kindly hid his face.

Pacing to and fro along the deck in solitary grandeur, occasionally, more from habit than hope of seeing a sail, glancing over the bulwarks on the broad expanse of un-ruffled ocean, I gave way to thought—not, however, to useless day-dreams and reveries, but to hard steadfast thought.

I marked out my future plans.

First and foremost I must render myself independent of the rains of heaven, by constructing a still, so that in a few hours I could procure sufficient water for days.

Next it was incumbent to clear the hold of the water, which was slowly but surely rising. How to do this was a subject of long and anxious study. To work the heavy pumps single-handed was a matter of utter impossibility, and I did not give it a second thought. There was nothing for it then but baling bucket by bucket—a tremendous task certainly, when I considered how many thousands, ay, hundreds of thousands, if not millions of bucketfuls there were in the deep hold of the big ship.

But even at this prospect my heart did not quail, and I sketched out a plan mentally of a whip, or light purchase, by which I might hoist the buckets quickly on deck when they were filled. It might take weeks or months to clear the ship of water—perhaps I should never do it; but at all events I should keep it from rising higher, and even reduce it. I don't know how or why it was, but a change had come over my feelings. Was it presentiment, or what? I no longer expected to be rescued from my extraordinary position immediately, but felt resigned to a prolonged sojourn on board the lovely *Phantom*.

I had become accustomed to the situation, and I realized the fact, that if ever I were restored to my native land, to Captain Copp and Polly, it must be brought about by my own skill, perseverance, and patience.

Well, now, what next, after having constructed a still to give me fresh water, and baled the vessel out?

The next thing, I said to myself, would be so to rig the vessel that she should hold her wind, and not pay off and run dead before it whether I would or no. To do this she must have more sail aft; and I spent fully an hour in devising how I was to rig anything with only the stump of the mizenmast remaining. And when that was done, what then?

Why then I should wait for a favourable breeze, and

when it came, make sail to the north-west, by pursuing which course the vessel would both be drawing nearer to her destined course and also come across the track of vessels.

Such was the plan for the future I sketched out for myself on that day when first I had drunk fresh water of my own distilling.

That night I slept soundly.

I occupied the captain's cabin, which I had made exceedingly comfortable.

Singular to say, something came to me in my dreams of which I had never thought while waking. That was the hose used for conveying the water pumped up for washing down the decks. It was not of leather, but canvas; nevertheless, it conveyed the water forced into it by the head pump without any appreciable quantity oozing through.

I awoke with this idea fresh in my mind, and at once set about searching for it, but, though I looked for more than an hour, fore and aft, I could not find it, so concluded that it had been lost when the waterspout overwhelmed the ship.

But though I could not find the hose, the idea was not lost. If canvas will convey water, I said, why should it not also steam? Why should not a canvas or linen pipe answer the purpose as well as a metal one?

On this idea I at once acted.

This day was much the same as the previous one, only that there seemed every prospect of its being more sultry, there being no clouds to ward off the scorching rays of the sun.

On consideration I laughed at my folly in looking for the hose, tempted to do so by a dream. This hose was as thick as my arm, and it would be out of all proportion to the size of the kettle which was to form the body of my still. But, I thought to myself, it is no reason I should not make a smaller hose out of some of the calico and stout linen in the hold.

Having got breakfast, I at once went to work. Of course I had needles and thread, and all that sort of thing in my chest—little Polly had seen to that—and I

occupied myself during the forenoon in cutting out long strips of linen.

Then, having taken the meridian altitude of the sun, and found that the vessel was still drifting south, much to my annoyance, I set to work to make a tube of canvas about an inch in diameter.

As I had expected, the day was dreadfully hot, and, what was worse, I could discern no sign of any rain-squalls.

I thought it would be cooler down the hold, so I lowered myself by the monkey-ladder and set to work.

However, the heat, combined with the comfortable position I had taken, seated on a whole heap of soft calico, with my back to the great iron tank—alas! now empty—had such an effect that I grew drowsy, and finally went off into a deep sleep.

And again I dreamt a most astonishing dream.

I dreamt that I had found the hose, and had affixed it to the steam-engine, which was in the hold immediately in front of me, and that the boiler was full of water, the furnace in full blast, and clear fresh water running from the cooling-tub, at the rate of half a pint a minute.

The way in which I found the hose, too, in my dream, was singular. I dreamt that I had searched all over the vessel in vain for it, and just as I was about to give up I saw a bird flying towards the ship. When the bird got nearer, I saw that it was little Polly from the *Haven of Rest*. She alighted on deck, and folding her wings about her, after the fashion of the flying creatures in Peter Wilkins' Island, came straight up to me, and, taking my hand, said,—

“You want to find the hose? What a hobbler you are, to be sure. Come along; I will show it to you.”

And in my dream she took me to it—but where, in what part of the ship it was, I could not for the life of me remember.

I woke up all at once, rubbed my eyes, and stared around me.

There was the steam-engine right in front of me, and so vivid had been my dream that I actually looked to see if the hose was not attached.

I laughed at myself for my folly, and tried to get the idea out of my mind, but somehow could not succeed.

The vision haunted me. I could almost fancy I saw the clear stream of limpid water trickling from the cooling-tub.

And the more I thought the more I felt convinced that the idea of utilizing the portable steam-engine was by no means a bad one. There was a large boiler all ready to hand, a furnace, pipes, and everything requisite to generate steam.

There was abundance of coal on board, and altogether I felt that I should have liked to try the experiment.

However, I persuaded myself ultimately that it was impossible, merely a silly dream, and set to work with a will, making the little tube of linen, which I hoped would answer all purposes.

By the evening I had made about two feet and a half, and resolved to experiment with this quantity at once.

So I half filled the kettle with salt water, made the lid steam-tight by means of white lead, and then placed it on the stove, in which I had made a roaring fire.

While it was getting to the boil, I busied myself in getting a large tub by the side of the stove, in one side of which, near the bottom, I bored a small hole.

Then I put the end of my linen tube through this, from inside outwards, leaving about an inch projecting. I next proceeded to carefully render the hole, with the tube inserted, water-tight, by plastering all round white lead. Next I filled the tub with cold water, and by the time this had all been accomplished the water in the kettle was close on to the boiling point.

I now attached the other end of the linen tube to the spout of the kettle, and placed the centre part of it in the tub of water.

Then I waited, and in a minute or so knew that steam was passing into the tube by seeing it distend near the spout of the kettle. In a short time there came a puff of steam out at the end protruding through the side of the tub, and this was followed by a small

stream of clear water, which proved to me that the steam was being condensed as I wished.

I placed a pannikin to catch the precious fluid, and could have shouted for joy.

It is an old and true saying, "there's many a slip 'twixt the cup and the lip."

In this case the cup was duly raised to my lips when the pannikin was about half full, and I instantly took a gulp of the beautiful clear water.

But almost instantly I spat it out again, and gave vent to a cry almost of despair.

The water was salt, so salt as not to be drinkable.

This was a heavy blow and sore discouragement, besides being a great puzzle.

Soon, however, I understood how it was. The salt water in the tub, through which the tube passed, had penetrated the linen, and, mingling with the fresh water condensed from the steam, had spoiled the whole, and rendered the result undrinkable.

My linen tube, then, was a failure—that was but too obvious.

I now cast about for means to obviate this leaking of the salt water through the fabric; and the idea came presently that I might cover the tube with some material which would better resist penetration.

As was my wont, I walked up and down the deck and thought it out.

Leather—soft leather—that was the stuff with which to cover my linen worm.

Whence was it to come?

"Kid gloves," was the prompt reply made to my own question.

Among the cases of goods down the hold which I had broken open were several containing ladies' and gentlemen's kid gloves of the best quality.

There, then, was a description of leather exactly suited to my purpose; and once more I felt that I had triumphed, or, at all events, that I had the means of achieving success.

My plan was simply this—to cut up the kid gloves, and use that part from the commencement of the fingers

to the wrist to cover my linen tube. Having got several boxes of the delicate kid gloves—intended for a very different purpose—I proceeded remorselessly to cut the fingers off and slit them open. From each glove I got a piece of kid nearly square, perhaps three and a half inches long by three wide. Four of these slips, or two pairs of gloves, would cover about a foot of the tube, allowing a little for selvage. I found it rather awkward work at first, sewing the kid round the linen tube, but presently hit upon a plan which rendered it easier. I cut a round staff of wood, like a rolling-pin, and planed it smooth. Inserting this in the tube, it distended the linen, and rendered it much more easy to fit the kid tightly on. That afternoon and evening I completed more than a foot of my linen and kid hose, and, trying it, found to my great delight that it was watertight.

I now determined that I would work hard and complete several yards of my hose or worm-pipe, and cover it before I made any more experiments, so certain was I of ultimate success.

I thought myself justified now in consuming what water remained, also the six bottles of claret, and the tins of preserved milk. By the time this was all gone I hoped that, having nothing to distract my mind, my still would be ready to set to work.

It was sunset when I laid down my needle, thread, and materials, and took a stroll about the deck, before turning in for the night.

The sea and sky presented the same unvarying aspect now, alas ! so familiar to me.

Nothing but the deep blue ocean—calm, glassy, boundless; not a speck on the horizon—nothing to relieve the monotony of the scene.

I sighed, and turning away, my glance fell on the foremast, on which there were now a great many notches I had cut to mark the days. Taking up the axe, I cut another one, and then counted.

Every Sunday I cut a longer notch to mark the weeks, and I found that there were ten such long notches and five over.

Seventy-five days !

I had been that time alone on board the ship, without seeing a human face or hearing a human voice.

"How much longer, how much longer?" I murmured; and my heart grew sad as I thought of my brave old uncle and sweet little Polly at the *Haven of Rest*.

Doubtless long before this the vessel had been given up as lost, and perhaps they at this moment were mourning me as dead.

The night was very close and sultry, so I dragged my mattress on deck, and lighting a pipe—one of my greatest consolations—gave myself up to a reverie of the past.

Presently I dropped off to sleep, and forthwith dreamt that I was back at the *Haven of Rest*.

CHAPTER XVIII.

MY DREAM COMES TRUE.

THEN in my dream I was suddenly transported back to the lonely ship, tossing about on the trackless ocean. I thought I was down the hold, and once more I saw the canvas hose used for washing down decks affixed to the engine. I thought I could see all the arrangements I had made for this still on a large scale. A big fire burned in the fire-box, and steam was pouring in a continuous stream into the hose, and, being condensed, clear water ran in a stream from the other end.

All at once, to my surprise, the engine began to work. I saw the great wheel—which served at once as a fly-wheel, and on which the strap to drive the threshing or other machine was fixed—revolving rapidly. Then I thought I went on deck, and returning with the end of the topsail halliards, affixed them in some manner round the axle, and lo! as the engine worked, the rope was wound round and the yard was hoisted.

All at once the engine gave a shrill whistle, and I awoke. I was considerably impressed by this dream, so vivid in its nature, and could not get to sleep again

for thinking of it. So I rose, and though it was only five o'clock A.M., went on deck, and lit the fire in the little stove to make some coffee.

It may seem a piece of reckless extravagance on my part to use any, even ever so small a quantity, of my little stock of water in making coffee; but I felt so confident that I should, at all events, overcome this difficulty, that I had no scruple at all on the subject, and even opened one of my tins of preserved milk and used half of it.

At two bells in the morning watch I proceeded to pump water and wash down the decks. This I seldom neglected, as I thought it important to keep the decks clean and sweet. Besides, the planks required wetting beneath that burning sun, or otherwise they would soon have been scorched to tinder.

I had just finished, and was thinking about getting breakfast, when I heard a fluttering, and looking aloft, beheld a bird—evidently a shore bird, for it seemed exhausted, and settled at once on the mainyard.

My heart beat wildly. I would catch it and tame it. The companionship of even a bird, which I might teach to know and love me, would be some relief to the dismal solitude. I went cautiously aloft, and on going out on the yard thought I should be able to catch the bird, which sat quite still and allowed me to approach within a couple of yards.

It was a beautifully marked brown bird, of the hawk species, as I concluded from the hooked beak, claws, and large piercing black eye. It never moved till I was quite close and had stretched out my hand to catch it, not without some fear of receiving a blow from its sharp beak.

At the moment, however, when I thought to seize it, the hawk suddenly dropped from the yard, and, spreading its wings, descended in a leisurely manner, and alighted on the deck, and proceeded to walk slowly forward.

I also came down, determined, if possible, to make the bird a prisoner.

As I walked after it the hawk slowly retreated, and

finally sought shelter and concealment under the topgallant forecastle. Taking in my hand a large piece of calico, which I intended to throw over my prize, so as to avoid being scratched, I followed. It was rather dark in this place, and at first I could not see the bird; but presently I discerned its bright eye gleaming on me like a star in the darkness.

Cautiously crawling on my hands and knees, I approached, and when quite close, threw my calico over the bird, as I thought.

I immediately made a grab with my other hand, but found, to my chagrin, that the hawk had escaped me.

I now commenced to grope about, thinking that it might be entangled in some of the folds of the calico, or had crouched down for concealment. Whilst thus employed my hand came on something, the nature of which I did not at first guess. But all at once the knowledge came to me like lightning's flash that I had found the canvas hose for which I had previously searched in vain.

I dragged it out from under the forecastle, and perceived that it was uninjured. Then, looking round for the bird, I saw it perched on the combings of the lower forecastle, where the berths of the lost crew were. Directly I approached him he hopped down, and I at once covered up the scuttle with some calico, so as to secure him.

I was struck instantly by the coincidence between what had happened and my dream, in which a bird had guided me to the hose I vainly sought.

Now I am not superstitious, but I must own that I was greatly struck, and even impressed, by this little incident. It is pretty certain I should not have thought of looking under the topgallant forecastle for the hose, where, doubtless, it was washed when the catastrophe happened. It is also certain that, in fact, the bird did really lead me to it; and now, when I remembered the deliberate way in which it had walked under the topgallant forecastle right up to the place where the hose lay, I could not help fancying that there was something in this beyond mere chance.

I got all the hose out, and stretched it along the deck. It was sound in every part, being nearly new. I could not divest my mind of the recollection of the two singular dreams I had; and though at the first blush it seemed absurd, I felt inclined to try the experiment by lighting the fire under the engine and filling the boiler. I was very awkward at first, and for a long time could not succeed in getting the fire to light. At last, however, it burned up, and then I went with a bucket to get coal from the lower part of the after hold. I worked with a will, impelled by a strange curiosity, and in a couple of hours had piled up beside the engine several hundredweight of coal, which I had hauled up from the hold, bucket by bucket. I made up the fire, closed the door, and then went on deck, just in time to catch about a quart of water from a shower of rain which fell. When I went down between decks again, I became aware, by the roaring noise, that steam had been got up, and was blowing off by the escape-pipe, the safety-valve having lifted, the pressure of steam exceeding the weight at which it was set.

I now got the end of the hose, and, not without some risk of scalding myself, placed it over the escape-pipe, from which the steam was rushing furiously, and secured it there with spun-yarn.

Then I put more coal on the fire, and went up on deck, where the other end of the hose was. A torrent of steam rushed from it, and it was distended the whole length, as it would have been by water.

I walked about, and thought for a few minutes; then, all at once making up my mind, exclaimed aloud,—

“I'll do it! Be the dream but an idle phantasy of the sleeping brain, or, indeed, a mysterious manifestation or foreshadowing of the future—a guide-post, as it were, pointing out to me which way I shall go—I'll make the essay!”

I was not ignorant of the difficulties and the amount of labour and preparation necessary before such an attempt could be made. In the first place it was necessary to cover the whole of the hose with some material which should prevent the salt water, in which it would

be immersed, from permeating. I could think of nothing better than the soft leather of which the kid gloves were made, and fetched two or three pairs to see if there would be sufficient kid in each single one to encompass the hose.

I cut one off at the fingers. The fire in the furnace having now slackened for want of feeding, little or no steam now came over ; so I slipped the kid glove over the end of the hawser.

To my surprise, it seemed to me to be an exact fit, and I eagerly proceeded to make certain. Yes, it was so ; the kid glove fitted tightly and exactly on the canvas hose, so that it seemed all I should have to do would be to cut the fingers off some hundreds, slip them on one by one, and then, having distended the hose by fastening up one end and pumping water into the other, proceed to sew the gloves together, let each overlap its fellow a little, and also stitch together the opening from the palm to the button at the wrist.

I was now full of excitement, and quite eager to make the trial.

First I cut off two or three dozen pairs of gloves at the fingers, and stitched them on the hose, now in a collapsed state. Then, tying up one end, I took the other, and attaching it to the spout of the head-pump, worked the handle till it was full of water.

It then resembled a huge snake puffed out to repletion ; but what pleased me was the fact that the kid gloves with the fingers cut off fitted so exactly.

Beginning at the end which had previously been attached to the escape-pipe of the engine, I pushed the gloves right up, and then proceeded to sew them together and join the slit in the palms.

To do this I had to let some of the water escape, so as to cause the hose to be slacker. In the course of three hours I had sewn on eight pairs of the gloves, and covered carefully more than two feet of the hose. After a time I had no doubt I should get more expert, and be able to affix properly twelve in the three hours, or four pairs an hour. That would be about three feet, or a yard in three hours—a foot an hour, in fact.

If, then, I were to work ten hours a day, I should finish three yards and a foot. In six days, therefore, I should be able to accomplish twenty yards, which I considered would be quite long enough for my worm-pipe.

Having gone into the calculation carefully, I resolved that it should be done. Using great economy, I reckoned that I had enough water, wine, and milk to last me for seven or eight days, and by that time I hoped my still would be ready for action. I did not reckon that the other part of the apparatus would take up much time. All I wanted was a large cask filled with cold water, to serve as a worm-tub. In this I should have to bore a hole near the bottom, and pass through the end of the canvas tube, and close up the chink with white lead. Then my still would be complete, and I should have nothing else to do but keep up a constant supply of cold water in the worm-tub, as that there originally got hot from the steam passing through the tube.

Then I might reasonably hope for a shower or two of rain, and if the worst came to the worst, I could procure small quantities of fresh water by means of the glass retort and receiver.

It was now evening, and I resolved to do no more work that day. I had no need to light the fire in the little stove to cook anything for supper, as there was still enough in the furnace of the steam-engine to roast a-joint, if I had had one.

Before getting supper, however, I went carefully down the fore-castle with a light and a parrot-cage I had found, in order to catch the hawk.

In this I had little difficulty, as the poor bird seemed quite exhausted. I took it aft in the cabin, and gave it some preserved meat and a little water in the cage. It drank up the water eagerly, and then proceeded to devour the meat in a way which proved to me that it was ravenously hungry.

This done, I went down into the hold, cooked a small piece of ham by the fire, and, having boiled a pint of water and made a pot of tea, sat down before the engine, my future servant, and enjoyed my supper more than I had done for many a day.

Then I lit my pipe, went on deck, and leaning over the bulwarks, gazed out on the boundless expanse of placid ocean, and fell into a deep reverie. It was still calm, or nearly so, nor was there any appearance of wind. Indeed, if there had been I should not have devoted much time to making sail, or navigating the ship; for I had made up my mind that before I gave my attention to aught else, I would have the means of procuring water.

CHAPTER XIX.

MY PLAN SUCCEEDS.

ANOTHER week has passed over my head, a week which, but for constant labour, would have been one of dismal monotony, perhaps even of blank despair.

The same eternal calm reigned—sometimes a breath of wind for an hour or so; the same broad unvaried expanse of ocean; the same sky, the same clouds, the same sun pouring down his scorching rays remorselessly on the vessel. It is enough to drive one mad. I cannot bear to be on deck now. I let the vessel drift, take her chance, without knowing or caring. I am intent on the one great object, that of procuring water. For the last four days there has been no rain, and I have been tormented by thirst. I have only about a pint of water left, and must use that to-night. Worse than all, I have broken the little retort, so I am cut off from that resource, to which I looked as the last hope. I worked hard all this week, and have almost finished my grand task, covering the hose with leather. At night, in place of lying down, I worked by lamp-light, preparing a large cask for a worm-tub. Having bored the necessary hole near the bottom, I stood it up on end, and having made a line round it with chalk, about two-thirds up, I proceeded to saw it through. This took me two hours, for I was weak, tired, and moreover unskilful.

At last, however, I got through with it, and, standing

it up near the engine, looked at it with satisfaction. It now formed a tub about four feet high, and seemed admirably adapted for its purpose. Inside this tub I stood upright a piece of the maintop-gallant-mast, about three and a half feet long, which I had sawed off for the purpose; the lower end I weighted with lead, so that when I filled the tub with water it should not float. This was to coil my hose or worm-pipe round, so that it should not lie all of a lump, or get entangled, but give free passage to the steam and condensed water.

Having done this, I took the hose, now very nearly completed, and coiled it round the piece of spar in the tub to see how it would lie.

It nearly filled the tub, which was what I had expected. I regretted I could not distend it then to see if there would be sufficient room in the tub. This, however, was not possible.

Next I laid the fire in the furnace, filled the boiler, and got up a dozen buckets of coal. Even then I could not cease for the night, but set to work and filled the tub. This done, I just took one look around, and turning into my bunk, was in a few moments fast asleep. It was past midnight when I went to rest, but, nevertheless, and in spite of the hard day's work I had done, I woke at sunrise, about five o'clock, and at once arose. I only had a quart of water remaining, so could not afford to make coffee. A half-pint, with a glass of claret in it, and a biscuit, formed my breakfast.

After a thorough sousing from the head-pump to freshen me up, I went to work.

First of all I lit the fire in the furnace of the engine, a job which took me more than an hour, so clumsy was I; the boiler I had filled with water the night before, so now I had only to attach the end of the hose to the escape-pipe, keep the fire burning, and await the result.

It would be an hour at least before the water would be hot, so I went on deck, ascended to the topsail-yard, and scanned the horizon, in hopes of seeing a sail. When I say in hopes, I am not speaking correctly. I had gone

aloft every day, sometimes twice or thrice, for so many weeks, all in vain, that now I scarcely expected that my eyes would be gladdened by the sight of a vessel. It was more as a matter of habit than anything else, prompted by a certain undefined yearning for human companionship.

Again the same monotonous look-out—sea and sky—sky and sea. There was a gentle air stirring from the south-east, and there seemed a prospect of its freshening. But this had now no interest for me, although it was from the very direction from which I had prayed the wind might come.

My whole mind was engrossed in the all-important affair I had in hand, the success or failure of which would in all probability bring, in the one case at least, a means of living on tolerably, in the other all the agonies and horrors of thirst.

A few hours would decide this question.

I went down into the 'tween decks, and had another look at my last hope—my sheet anchor.

I saw by the gauge that there was no steam as yet, and remembering the hawk which had led me to the hose, I went to feed him.

Already he had become nearly tame, and knew my voice, giving evident signs of pleasure at my approach. I had let him out from the parrot-cage, in which I first put him, and he now had a cabin to himself. Fortunately there was plenty of meat on board—both salt and preserved in tins; so my feathered companion had no reason to complain of his fare.

When I entered the cabin, he flew on my shoulder, and commenced playfully pecking at my ear with his beak. He seemed so very tame that I resolved to take him on deck and give him his food there, at the risk of losing him. Taking a half-empty tin of preserved meat, I went on to the poop, the hawk still on my shoulder, and threw it down on the deck for him. Instantly he swooped down on it, and in a few minutes made his breakfast. Then he began walking about, looking here and there and occasionally taking a little fluttering fly, but settling on the deck again almost immediately. I

guessed that he wanted water, and went down and brought him some out of my scanty stock in a pannikin.

The bird drank it, and then, spreading his wings, flew away. I watched him circle round and round, soar high above the mast, and then hover, as if uncertain which way to wing his flight—with feelings of sorrow and bitterness.

Ah! he has eaten and drunk his full, and now he will fly away and leave me alone. I thought that even in a bird gratitude might exist.

With a sigh I came off the poop and proceeded towards the main hatchway.

I stopped and looked up once more at my truant hawk. He was circling round and round at a great height now, but still kept near the ship.

Will he go—or will he not? I asked myself. Then, with a sudden impulse, I said—"It shall be an augury of my fate, of my success or failure. If the bird comes back I shall take it as a good omen; if not, I shall expect failure, disaster, and death."

A foolish fancy, doubtless, but it took strong possession of my mind, and I sat moodily down on the combings of the hatch and watched the hawk still describing circles in the air. The bird began to descend, but at the same time edged further from the vessel.

I bethought me, however, that it would not do to let the fire go down in the engine-furnace, and descended the hold to put more coal on. I saw by the gauge that the water was hot, and that there was a pressure of several pounds of steam; a little more and the safety-valve would lift, and then the success or failure of my plan would very soon be apparent.

When I again went on deck my hawk was gone. A sigh, almost amounting to a groan, broke from my breast, and I hung my head in silent sadness.

It was weak, foolish, childish, and idiotic to be thus impressed by such a trifle, but that I was so is too true; and in this narrative I chronicle facts, and have no wish to make myself out a hero.

I remained thus for a minute or two, giving myself up to melancholy thoughts of the happy past, glowing

ones as to the future, when I was startled by a flapping and rustling in the air, followed by a shrill scream; and looking up, I beheld the hawk swooping round in small circles between the main and foremast as he descended.

I saw he had something in his claws, but so quick were his movements that I could not tell what it was.

Imagine, then, my surprise when a fish about ten inches in length, and weighing, perhaps, half a pound, fell at my feet, and not being dead, commenced leaping about.

The hawk meanwhile perched himself on the rail and gave vent to a shrill cry—meant, I suppose, to express his pride and gratification.

Thus, then, my augury had turned out favourably.

I was too much excited at the auspicious event to pay much attention to the fish at my feet, or to account for the incident; but in a short time I perceived that it was a flying fish, and then I surmised that the hawk had mistaken this flying fish for a small bird, and swooping down, had seized it in mid-air and brought it to me as a trophy.

I now hastened to reward the hawk, and calling him, he followed me into the cabin, where I gave him some more meat, and endeavoured to make him understand my gratification at his conduct.

I can't say whether he appreciated my approval, but he seemed to me to do so, and altogether I experienced a complete revulsion of feeling, my spirits rising to a pitch corresponding to my former fits of despair.

I now hurried away, and went down the hold, as it was time to make the grand attempt. At the moment I reached the engine, the steam in the boiler acquired sufficient force to lift the valve, and out rushed instantaneously a torrent of steam into the hose. With intense anxiety I watched the serpentine folds of my canvas worm distend, as the hot vapour pushed itself violently onwards.

A few minutes of unspeakable suspense, and lo! I beheld a steady stream of clear water run from the end which protruded from the bottom part of the tub. I had placed a quart pot under this, and close by stood two or

three buckets, which, if all went well, I intended to fill. In about seven minutes the tin pot was full, and then, with trembling hands and intense anxiety (for I remembered how on a former occasion I had been bitterly disappointed by finding the water salt), I lifted it to my lips.

I tasted it.

Then there broke from me a wild shout of joy, and the next minute the whole quart of beautiful sweet fresh water was poured down my parched throat.

I replaced the quart measure under the spout, and, overcome by emotion, threw myself on the deck and wept for very joy. Presently I arose, and not forgetful of the source whence all blessings and favours come, I went down on my knees and fervently returned thanks to the Omnipotent for this great mercy.

When I arose from my knees, I felt in heart as strong as a lion. The one terror which had haunted me night and day ever since the accident to the casks and tank, had now, I fondly hoped, been for ever put to flight. Come what might, it was not likely I should perish for want of water, or again feel the terrible pangs of thirst. Now I went to work with a will, and made arrangements to save the water, which was still running freely on, in a bright clear stream. I poured quart after quart into the bucket until it was brim full, and then, fastening it on to a rope, went on deck myself, and hauled it after me.

I had found among the steward's things a small cask, in the head of which a square hole had been cut, with a lid fixed with leather hinges attached. This he used to keep full of water for the cabin use, so as to obviate the necessity of going forward whenever he wanted any. This would hold about fifty gallons, and I resolved to fill it for future use. I did not expect to do so in one day, but calculated with reason that I might in two, according to the rate at which the water ran. I had got a bucketful, nearly two gallons, in less than an hour, which was excellent work. On the strength of this splendid success, I thought myself fully entitled to a good breakfast, so took down with me coffee, a coffee-pot, a tin of

milk, biscuits, some slices of ham, and also a box of sardines, a case of which I had fortunately discovered, with a frying-pan, plate, &c.

The coffee I made in a few minutes, and having broiled the ham, proceeded to enjoy a most excellent meal. Indeed, my appetite was greater than I had thought, and after I had finished every bit of the broiled ham, I felt as though I could have eaten as much more.

All at once I remembered the flying fish the hawk had caught, and I saw no reason why it should not be good eating. In two minutes I had it in the frying-pan, just on the edge of the engine fire (to have put it right on would have scorched it quite up in a second), and in two minutes more it was done.

Before and since I have tasted delicate fish, but never in all my life did I partake of anything so delicious. I finished every bit of it, washed down by a pint cup of coffee, with preserved milk.

I rose from this, the heartiest meal I had enjoyed on board the *Phantom*, and, like a giant refreshed, went to work.

The salt water in the tub, for cooling the steam passing through the hose, had now got very hot itself in the process. The effect of this was soon apparent, by the stream of fresh water running from the spout becoming very small, and by occasional jets of steam spurting out, proving that the water in the worm-tub was not sufficiently cold to do its work. I at once set to work to remedy this, by emptying the tub and refilling it with cold water. I emptied the water from the tub on the 'tween deck and down the lower hold, thinking that the getting over the immediate supply of fresh water was of more importance than twenty or thirty bucketfuls, more or less, in the hold of the vessel.

Fortunately for me, the tub stood nearly under the main hatchway, so I was able to draw water with a rope and bucket on the upper deck, and from it into the tub, without going down between decks.

While I was doing this, I had stopped the supply of steam by closing the furnace door, so that there might be no draught for the fire, and putting additional weight

on the safety-valve. When I had filled the tub with cold water, I again opened the fire door, put more coal on, lightened the safety-valve, and in a few minutes the process of distillation was again going on.

The worst part of the work was keeping a supply of cold water in the tub as that in it became heated by the steam in the hose. Still, in view of the enormous advantage I was securing, I did not grumble at the severity of the labour, but worked on till sundown—keeping up a continual supply of cold water.

When I knocked off for the day, I found that I had about half filled the fifty-gallon cask in the steward's pantry. I was too tired to cook supper, so contented myself with a pot of tea, a biscuit, and a few sardines.

That night I slept the sweet dreamless sleep only to be earned by hard bodily labour, and awoke in the morning refreshed and in excellent spirits, and with a ravenous appetite.

I could afford to be a bit of an epicure now, so had for breakfast a pot of excellent coffee, with milk, biscuits, butter, and dried salmon broiled.

Lately I had been afraid to touch the latter, though I liked it very much, because the saltness of it gave rise to thirst which I dared not quench by a big drink.

Now it was different; I was independent of rain squalls for water, and could distil enough in a day to last me a fortnight, using it *ad libitum*.

Of course I did not forget my hawk. The dainty rascal would not eat fish, so I had to open a tin of preserved veal for him especially.

He was now so tame that he would come to me when I called him, and allowed me to take hold of him, and do with him as I liked. I said to myself that when I had more time on my hands I would take master Jack (so I had christened him) in hand, and try and teach him to understand me—to tame him thoroughly, in fact.

This day I spent exactly as the previous one, keeping at the still, except for half an hour at noon, when I took the meridian altitude of the sun, and found that we were still drifting southward. I made the latitude to be $2^{\circ} 25''$ S., and had little doubt that the ship was also

being carried to the eastward for, lately, nearly all the light breezes which had risen only to fall again had been from the west.

Before night I had filled the fifty-gallon cask and had a bucketful over.

I now resolved to dismantle the still for the present, and at once turn my attention to reducing the water in the hold.

There was now, I found, nearly five feet, and it was high time that something was done. I must confess I did not at all like the prospect, but there was no help for it. I saw before me at least a week's incessant toil of a most arduous kind. I could not hope to make any considerable impression on such a large body of water in less time.

It took me half a day to rig a whip, or light purchase, by which to run up the buckets and empty them on deck.

It took me the other half of the day to clear away the cargo in the lower hold under the main hatch, so as to form a sort of well to get at the water.

I worked for an hour in the evening, drawing up about fifty buckets, just to make a start, and then went to bed, determined to go at it with a will on the following day.

Another night of just about the same character as those preceding it passed over my solitary head—calm, with light baffling airs—the ship lazily, slowly rocking up and down to the long steady swell.

In the morning I was at work betimes, and worked on all day, with the exception of an hour at noon, when I took the sun and got dinner. I found that the vessel was as nearly as possible in the same latitude as the day before, perhaps a mile or so to the southward; the sun that afternoon shone down with unbounded splendour, and his rays made it so smoking hot that every half-hour or so, instead of emptying the bucket of water on the deck, I poured it over my own head and body, in order to keep cool. I had nothing on but a calico shirt and a pair of duck trousers, a handkerchief wound round my head in place of a cap. Thus attired, I toiled on manfully from early morn till sundown, with the exception, as I have said, of an hour in the middle of the day.

I found I could draw up and empty fifty buckets per hour, and fixed that quantity as a task, so that if at any time I took ten minutes' spell, I had to work the harder to make it up. My watch I hung up on the mainmast, so I always had the time before me. I worked altogether ten hours and a half, and thus on this first day had drawn up 525 buckets of water, each bucket containing more than two gallons of water.

I reckoned that I had on this the first day of baling freed the vessel of about 1,200 gallons of water. And yet, alas! looking down into the open space or well I had cleared in the hold, I could perceive little abatement; to me it seemed that there was as much water in the hold as before I began.

Day after day I stuck at my self-imposed but necessary task, and, as I lived well, had abundance of water, and had rigged an awning to keep myself cool, besides occasionally sousing water over my body, I suffered no harm from the labour, arduous as it was: indeed, physically, it improved me. I noticed at the expiration of a week that the muscles of my arms and chest were greatly developed, and that they were much harder and firmer than before I commenced.

I was now, notwithstanding all the perils, hardships, and fatigues of body, and anguish and worry of mind, in splendid physical condition. I felt and knew that I was much bigger and stronger than I had been even a few months previously.

At the end of a week of this hard but wholesome toil, I had considerably reduced the depth of water in the hold. Sounding the pump-well, I found that whereas there had been five feet of water, there was now only a little over three and a half feet. I hoped after another week's labour to have so far reduced the water as to be able to turn my attention to other things. Several times while I was intent on my task a light breeze had arisen from a favourable direction for the course I wished to steer; but I had determined to free the ship of water before I attended to anything else (except a matter of paramount importance), so suffered the vessel to drift as the wind and current might take her.

This week's work ended on Saturday evening, and I looked forward to my Sunday's rest with no little pleasure ; for I always observed Sunday when there was no urgent necessity for labour. Had there been any immediate danger or risk attending my relaxing my labours, I should have worked on, remembering the simple words of the Founder of our faith, that the Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath.

I was the more glad of a rest for the reason that on Saturday morning I had slipped, and still holding on to the rope by which I was drawing up a bucket of water, had slightly sprained my right shoulder. There was no great harm done, yet it occasionally gave me a twinge of pain. I thought that a day's rest would put it all right.

On this Sunday, the 25th of November, the sun rose bright and clear, and there was a pleasant breeze from the S.S.E. Now, as the course I wished to steer was N.N.W., it was a dead fair wind.

Under the circumstances, I resolved to loose and set the foresail, which I did without much trouble.

Then, going to the helm, I put her on her course, and in the smooth water and light breeze she required little or no steering.

Indeed, when I lashed the wheel amidships and left, I found that she did not give more than a couple of points on either side of her course.

I passed the day strolling about the deck, and in amusing myself with my hawk, which had now become perfectly tame.

It struck me that it might be possible to teach him to repeat his former exploit, and catch flying fish for my table ; and taking him on my wrist, I stood on the poop and watched for a shoal to rise.

In those latitudes it is seldom an hour passes without the patter, patter of these curious little fish being heard, as they drop into the water, making a noise like that of a shower of rain.

I had not long to wait before a shoal rose, about a hundred yards astern, and dropped again, only a few fathoms from the vessel.

I immediately threw the hawk off my wrist, and gave

a cry of encouragement. He instantly soared into the air, but the wind was against him, and he either did not see or did not care about fish catching. However, I did not give up with this first failure; and when the hawk returned, after a quarter of an hour's cruise, I again caught him, placed him on my wrist, and waited. Presently an excellent opportunity offered. A shoal of flying fish rose about fifty yards on the starboard quarter, and passed close under the stern. I was standing by the taffrail, and just as they went by I threw up the hawk. This time he saw them, and instantly sweeping down, seized one between his talons, and bore the fish aloft, screaming, in triumph.

After circling about for a minute or so, he swept gracefully down to the vessel, and dropped the flying fish on the deck, near where I stood.

I gave him a small piece of preserved meat as a reward, and then, taking him again on my wrist, waited for another chance. One soon came, and again my docile hawk displayed his skill, and secured me another fish. I gave him another small piece of meat, and essayed a third attempt, which proved as successful as before.

Thus, in the course of an hour, my hawk had provided me with three fresh fish, of delicious flavour, for dinner. This was not only a treat, but a great advantage in point of health. I had not eaten fresh meat or vegetables now for four months, and, as is usual, had a longing for unsalted food—a warning that nature gives against too prolonged a salt diet. As for vegetables, I could not hope to get any until picked up by some ship; but for the future, when I had baled out the ship, I resolved to turn my attention to procuring fresh fish, in order to ward off that dreadful disease, scurvy.

After this successful fishing, I gave my tame beautiful hawk an ample repast of preserved meat. Speaking of this preserved meat, I may as well explain. It was fresh, true, but had been so pulped, and all flavour taken out of it by the process of preserving, as to look and taste as though it had been boiled almost to rags. I could not bear it, I absolutely loathed it; indeed, my stomach would not stand

it, although I am aware that some are very partial to it. Of course, if it came to a question between that and starvation, I should have to eat it; but so long as there was salt beef, pork, ham, flour, biscuit, &c., on board in abundance, I could not touch it.

However, the hawk was evidently of a different way of thinking; for he devoured the ample meal with which I rewarded him with avidity.

I may here say a few words about this bird: though hitherto I have called him a hawk, I believe falcon would be more correct. He was about the size and weight of a goose; very close and thick in plumage; in length he was about twenty inches; the stretch of his wings over four feet; and his weight from two and a half to three pounds, as nearly as I could guess.

The colour of the back and upper part of the wings was a brilliant brown, speckled with black; round the neck there was a collar of jet-black feathers; the breast and belly were cream-white spangled with brown; and there were also faint dusky lines running from the throat across the breast and belly; the claws and legs were a bright yellow, and there was a circle of the same colour round either eye; the tail was brown with black bars across; the claws were long, sharp, and very powerful.

Its strength and swiftness on the wing were prodigious. I have watched him soar aloft till a mere speck in the sky, and then all at once he would come shooting down perpendicularly, till within a few yards of the water, when the great wings would be outspread, the rapid descent suddenly arrested, and the falcon shoot along the surface of the sea horizontally, like an arrow from a bow. The prodigious rapidity of this bird's flight was almost bewildering. I would watch it sometimes till it was fully a mile away from the vessel, barely visible; in far less time than a minute it would come rushing by like a blast of wind, then soar in the air and gently sail down on to the deck. I had now no fear of losing it, as it seemed to have become quite accustomed to the vessel, and manifested considerable affection to me.

This beautiful and daring bird was an inestimable comfort to me, and, strange to say, I no longer felt alone.

All that Sunday afternoon I mooned about, laid plans for the future, and meditated on the past.

As regards my plans for the future, they related only to equipping and managing the vessel; for it was my intention, after having baled her out, to rig a sort of jury mizen-mast, so that I could keep her on a wind, and steer to the northward and eastward.

I had by evening arranged in my mind what sort of a rig I would bend on the mizen-mast, and hoped to commence work thereon in another week.

At night my shoulder pained me a little, and I could not use it readily. However, I flattered myself that it would be all right in the morning, and with a light heart, considering the circumstances, I got my supper, fed the falcon, and composed myself to sleep.

As, however, on the next day an event of importance occurred, and a wonderful discovery was accidentally made, I will finish this, and begin another chapter.



CHAPTER XX.

I HOIST THE TOPSAIL-YARD.

THE sun rose in red and fiery glory on this morning of November the 26th, 1854.

The wind had fallen, and it was again a dead calm.

The sea was like a slightly undulating sheet of glass, and the vessel lay almost motionless, slightly and slowly heaving up and down with the long solemn swell.

As a matter of habit, I went aloft with the telescope, and scanned the horizon for a sail, though I scarcely expected to see one.

I now found that my sprained shoulder was very stiff and painful, but thought it would wear off by-and-by, when I got warm.

Accordingly I prepared breakfast, intending to set to work at my task of baling immediately afterwards.

But when I lowered the bucket, and pulled it up full,

my shoulder gave me such intense pain that I was forced to desist.

"It will be better presently," I said to myself; "it is stiff from lying on it, I suppose."

So I walked about and rubbed the injured joint, and after an hour again made an attempt; but I was forced to give it up—the pain and stiffness of the joint were too much.

This was annoying, after all the strong resolutions I had come to, to bale the vessel out right off and have done with it.

However, it could not be helped, so I went on the poop, and, as was my habit when I wished to think, walked up and down, and took counsel with myself as to the proper course to be pursued.

I bethought me that I had used a good deal of water during the last week, and also that there was another small cask down the lazaretto which I might also fill.

Said I to myself, "If my shoulder is too bad to enable me to bale the ship out, I can at least set my patent steam-engine distilling apparatus at work. It won't be much trouble just to keep the fire going, supply a few buckets of cold water to the worm-tub every now and then, and collect the fresh water."

No sooner decided on than I set to work. I got the empty cask up from the lazaretto, rolled it along the deck, and lowered it down the main hold. Fortunately, I had got up a good supply of coal, so that had not to be done. I soon lit the fire, having become more expert than I was, and also filled the boiler of the engine, which was by this time nearly empty.

All these things I could do with one hand, whereas in the baling operation it was absolutely necessary I should employ both; the worm-tub was already full of water, and now all was ready, and I only waited for the water to boil and the steam to come over.

I employed this interval in stirring up the furnace and throwing more coal on, and in a quarter of an hour I had a roaring fire.

Then I looked to the safety-valve—from which the steam was to come through the escape-pipe. I shifted

the weight on the lever of the safety-valve, so that it would take a greater pressure of steam to lift it. This I did without any definite object, but purely from idleness and curiosity to see how great a pressure of steam I could get.

The furnace was now roaring away in fine style, and I saw by the gauge that there was already a considerable quantity of steam in the boilers.

In a few minutes there was a pressure of thirty pounds to the inch—which rose rapidly to thirty-five, forty, and fifty to the inch. Then the valve lifted, and the steam went rushing into the pipe. I was sitting in front of the engine, and now got up and shut the furnace door in order to lessen the draught, as there was now a tremendous fire.

This done, I hastened round to the worm-tub to see if fresh water was coming off.

In doing so I accidentally laid my hand on the handle of a brass lever in the front of the engine, above the furnace.

It yielded to my hand.

Before I had got round to the spout at the bottom of the tub, whence I expected to see fresh water flow, I heard a loud clanking and creaking, then a puff of steam, and then a continuous round of machinery in motion!

I looked up in astonishment.

The engine was in motion; the great fly-wheel was revolving rapidly.

Steam now ceased to flow through the escape pipe, as it was used instead in turning the machinery, and found exit with the smoke through the funnel.

My first impulse was to turn back the handle of the lever which I had accidentally twisted to its original position.

But, from curiosity more than anything else, I waited and watched the action of the machinery.

I had seen this description of engine in motion before, but had never paid any particular attention.

It seemed to me very beautiful; I thought I should never tire watching the piston shoot in and out of the cylinder, at each stroke turning a crank which, in turn,

set the great wheel and all the machinery in motion. Then I went to the front of the engine and looked carefully at all the little cocks placed there, and called to my mind the uses of each, which had been explained to me by the good-natured engineer in charge during the first few weeks I had been on board the *Phantom*.

I now called everything to my mind, and seeing the engine in motion, exclaimed aloud,—

“Why, I know all about it—I could drive the engine myself!”

Then I amused myself by turning a cock and blowing the steam whistle, letting a jet of steam escape from another cock, diminishing the speed of the engine by turning the lever towards the end marked *shut*, and then making it go round at a tremendous rate by putting the lever right up to the end marked *open*.

All this I did for amusement, and was highly delighted thereat. Strange to say, for a long time it never occurred to me that I might turn this strong and docile monster to practical use.

“Ah!” I said with a sigh (I have before mentioned that I most frequently thought aloud, for even the sound of my own voice was better than nothing)—“if I had the strength of that engine, what light labour it would be baling the ship out. Instead of dragging a bucketfull up at a time, it should be a caskfull, containing as much as a hundred buckets.”

I stopped and suddenly started to my feet from my seat, where I was watching the play of the engine. I don’t know whether such is the case with other people, but with me every great idea and happy thought came not slowly and gradually, the result of long and careful reasoning, but like lightning’s flash, suddenly, instantly, and without warning.

So it was in this case. “I cannot be as strong as that engine, it is true,” I said, “but why should I not make available the iron horse?” The grandeur of the thought actually made me tremble, and I was so excited that I went upon deck and walked about on the poop for some time to collect my thoughts.

My beautiful tame falcon came fluttering about my

head, evidently wishing to attract my attention, but I was too busy with my own thoughts, and with a harsh cry of anger drove him away, doubtless wondering in his bird mind what had offended me. Now that the idea had once arisen, it took such firm hold of me that I felt I should be fit for nothing else until I had made an attempt.

An attempt?—a success, I should say!

Why should I fail?

There was no insurmountable difficulty in the way—nay, I persuaded myself no very great difficulty. All that I should have to do would be to make some contrivance which should haul in on a rope.

At first I thought of taking a turn with a rope round the shaft on which the fly-wheel and driving-wheel revolved.

But a little reflection soon convinced me that such a course would be impracticable.

The engine as it worked would, it was true, haul in the rope, but the shaft, as it wound the rope round itself, would soon become blocked up, and the machinery would come to a standstill, or the rope be broken.

I had now got calmer, and better able to think, so I went down into the hold and had a look at the engine.

The fire was getting low now, and the supply of steam falling off; the engine worked more slowly, and I could the better watch the movement of every part, and distinguish the purpose for which crank, wheel, and valve played.

I knew that in actual use, for the purpose for which it was intended, that is to say, working a threshing and winnowing machine, the engine worked in the following manner:—

A large leather circular strap was passed over the driving-wheel in the first place, and then over a small wheel which turned a shaft. The shaft in turn gave motion to all the wheels, cogs, and mechanism of the threshing machine.

Now the idea which rose to my mind was this—

To make a strong shaft and insert an end in a hole in one of the timbers of the ship on either side, in such a

way that the shaft should freely revolve with as little friction as possible.

Then if I were to pass the strap first round the shaft, and next round the fly-wheel, taking care to tighten it sufficiently by moving back the engine—which was on wheels—when the driving or fly-wheel of the engine revolved, so must the shaft.

And it would follow, of course, that if the end of a rope were taken a couple of turns round the shaft, and held or fastened, when the engine was put in motion the rope would be wound up, if the resistance were not greater than the engine had power to overcome.

In that case, of course, it would come to a standstill.

The shaft winding up the rope in that manner would act like the barrel of the winch on deck, with which two men could do the work of twenty.

Thinking of the winch, it struck me that I might make it useful, so I went on deck and inspected it.

It was fixed just abaft the foremast, and though I found I could not make it available, yet I got some useful ideas from noting the way in which the extremities of the shaft or axle were fixed in their sockets.

These sockets were of iron, and I resolved that the sockets or bearings in which my shaft revolved should also be of iron.

The shaft itself must be of wood, that was quite certain, as in the first place there was not a round, or indeed any other, bar of iron long enough, and besides, I had no means of blacksmithing, or indeed doing any good at all with metal.

With wood it was different. I had plenty of tools, and doubted not I could soon fix a wooden shaft right across the vessel, and place a drum or barrel on it which I would connect with the engine by means of the strap.

The first thing to be done was to select a spar for the shaft, and smooth it and cut it to the requisite length.

I chose a good sound spar, a topgallant stud'sail boom, which I proceeded to plane smooth and make of equal diameter at all parts.

The greatest breadth of the vessel outside was fifty-five feet, but inside, from timber to timber between

decks, it was exactly fifty feet. The stud'nsail boom was just a few feet too long, and I should have to saw some off one end. I didn't do so, however, as I wished to make all my arrangements first, for I knew that if I cut the spar too short it would be an irremediable error, while I could at any time take off a foot or so.

I now laid aside the work of baling the vessel out, satisfied that I had so far reduced the water, that, as she leaked only very slowly, it would be a week or two at least before it would have attained its former level.

It was my intention to devote all my energies, all my time, all my strength, and all my thoughts to the working out of this new and splendid idea.

The first thing was to get sockets, or bearings, as engineers call them, in which the ends of my shaft were to work.

I hunted up all the old ironwork I could find, and at last pitched upon a number of iron rings or bands, ranging in diameter from an inch and a half to eight inches.

The smaller rings or bands were much thicker in proportion than the larger ones, and it was on two of the small ones that I first pitched to make my sockets or bearings.

I took two an inch and a half in diameter, and selecting two spots in one of the timbers on either side, marked it with chalk.

These two spots were exactly opposite to each other, and about three feet from the floor—or deck would be more correct, only that as in the 'tween decks of a vessel there is a deck both above and below, a mistake might be made.

I next proceeded with an auger to bore a hole in the timber at the place I had marked on the starboard side. I made the hole to the depth of about ten inches.

This done, I placed a large round bar of iron, called a "norman," about an inch in diameter, in the furnace of the engine, having first made a roaring fire. It was soon red hot at one end; and then with this I proceeded to enlarge the auger-hole by burning away the wood of the beam.

This might seem at the first blush a very clumsy way

of proceeding, as I had plenty of tools and might have done it more neatly.

But I had a reason, and a good one.

I knew that burning hardened wood, and as these timbers were to bear all the strain, pressure, and friction of the shaft, I thought it as well that the bearings should be as hard as possible.

Having made the hole on the port side about the right size, I proceeded to force in the iron ring; this I did by means of a heavy two-handed hammer called a top-maul. This done, I wedged the iron ring in yet tighter.

I now got my spar, which was to make the shaft, and cast about for an iron bolt of the right size and thickness, to drive into the end, so that this bolt, protruding a few inches, might rest in the ring-bolt and there revolve when the shaft was put in motion.

Fortunately, I found plenty of bolts among the carpenter's stores, and selected one about three quarters of an inch in diameter. I now bored a hole in the end of the spar with an auger, as I had before in the timber of the vessel's side, and enlarged it until I could just fix the end of the bolt therein. Then with the top-maul I drove it in.

Another good idea came to me as it were by intuition. The iron bolt was well driven in; it was about ten inches long, and I had burned in the wood of the spar, so that it seemed as firm as the rock of Gibraltar.

This was my new idea. I had seen wheelwrights putting the tires on wheels.

The tire of a wheel, as everybody I suppose knows, is the large iron ring which goes round the woodwork outside all.

This is put on when redhot, and water thrown over it, upon which the iron, according to a well-known law, contracts greatly, and binds the whole together with its firm grip.

Now I wished to strengthen and tighten the wood at the end of my spar so that it should more firmly grip the iron bolt I had driven in.

So I selected an iron band a little smaller than the

end of the spar. With a broad chisel I tapered off the end until I could just get the band on.

Then I put this band in the furnace, and when red hot took it out again with a pair of blacksmith's tongs, and placed it on the end of the spar. This was a matter of a little difficulty, but I finally succeeded, and drove it on the spar four or five inches.

A bucket of water thrown over it stopped the wood burning, which it had already commenced to do, and caused the iron band to contract so violently as to almost bury itself in the wood. The result was all that I could wish; the iron bolt was so firmly jammed in the wood, that though it might be broken, I felt sure it could not by any possibility be loosened. So far so good.

When the iron band had rooted, I inserted the bolt in the ring in the beam, and found that it answered very well. I poured some oil from a box of sardines I had opened on the bearing, and found that it worked quite easily—that I could turn the shaft round with my hands without trouble.

Now I had to arrange about fixing the other end of my shaft, which I succeeded in doing after a great deal of trouble and many failures; for it was necessary that the other end should be fixed in a different manner. It will be seen at once that it was impossible to insert another similar iron bolt in a hole in a beam right opposite.

Finally I decided on a plan. All—or nearly all—the strain would be on the end of the shaft I had first fixed, as that was on the starboard side—as was the engine: the strap from the fly-wheel would come about ten feet only from this bearing. On the opposite side, I, as before, bored an auger-hole, and then enlarged it by means of the red-hot "norman." I did not make this hole so deep or wide as in the other case.

I then proceeded to cut a slit or channel in the timber, so as to be able to introduce the iron pin on which the shaft was to turn.

I considered that as there would be no great strain on this end, I might dispense with iron for the bolt to rest on.

I cut the channel or slit a little higher than the hole,

so that the iron bolt when introduced would drop down into the bed where it would work.

All this, though it does not take very long to describe, cost me an infinitude of trouble, and many failures.

It was five days before I got as far as I have just written; even then I had not nearly finished, as it was necessary to make some sort of a drum, or small wheel, round the shaft, for the strap, as the shaft itself would not be of sufficient diameter to give great power.

For I knew that the greater the diameter of the drum or wheel affixed to the shaft, and around it, the greater would be the power, although the shaft would not revolve so rapidly.

It was power I wanted, not speed: so that I could hoist the topsail or yard, it was of small import whether it were done in one minute or three.

I remembered that it is a principle in mechanics, that where power is gained time is lost, and where time is gained power is lost.

However, having fixed my shaft, I resolved to try whether it would realize my expectations and work.

This I could do without making the drum or wheel round the spar, and I at once set about it. Of course the first thing was to light the fire in the furnace, and get steam up. This was soon done, and then I made the necessary arrangements to prove the soundness or the folly of my views.

First of all I placed the endless circular band of the engine round the shaft; then I placed it round the fly-wheel of the engine, and as it was not tight enough I shifted the engine farther away.

This I managed by taking away the chocks and moving the wheels by means of a handspike. Then I again securely fixed the engine by means of the same chocks.

So soon as there was a good head of steam, and it began to escape by the safety-valve, I started the engine.

Clank—clank—snort—snort—away went my iron horse. Backwards and forwards went the piston, round went the fly-wheel, and to my great delight round also

went my shaft. I ran to the bearings, oiled them carefully, and watched how they worked.

"Admirable!" I cried in great glee, "nothing could be more beautiful—it goes like the works of a watch!"

I stood and looked on for some minutes in silent admiration, and then determined to put my contrivance to a test yet more severe—a test which should decide once for all and for ever, whether it would be of as much service to me as I anticipated.

I resolved to see if the engine with my additions could hoist the foretopsail yard.

If it could, I should consider that I had made a glorious success.

I was not long in making all necessary preparations to bring the matter to the stern test of experiment.

I went forward, passed the fall of the foretopsail halliards through a block which I worked to a ring-bolt near the foot of the foremast; then I led the rope aft to the edge of the main hatch, where I worked on another block and veered the fall through.

And from there I took it down below, and passed two or three turns round the shaft.

Now the result would or ought to be as follows:—

When I started the engine the shaft should go round, and in going round of course wind up the rope, two or three turns of which were twisted round it; and in winding up the rope it must necessarily hoist the topsail yard, for this rope led to the purchase on the chain, which raised and lowered the yard.

Determined to give the engine and the result of my labour and skill a fair chance, I made a roaring fire in the furnace, weighted down the safety-valve, so as to get the utmost possible pressure of steam in the boiler, and then calmly awaited my fate. In about three quarters of an hour steam began to blow off at the safety-valve, and I knew it was time to begin.

I took three turns of the fall (or rope) of the topsail halliards round the shaft; then, as there was not enough to reach on deck, I fastened another rope on to the end.

Next I tied two light lines to the lever which started

the engine, and stopped it when necessary, so that I could do both these things on the upper deck.

I then went on deck myself, taking with me these small lines.

And now, all being in readiness, I took hold of the rope attached to the topsail halliards, and started the engine.

Clank—clank—rattle—rattle—puff-puff, and round went the fly-wheel, slowly at first, and round also went the shaft with a groaning creaking noise.

However, it did go round, and that was the grand point.

I now pulled the line attached to the lever, so as to turn full steam on.

This had an instantaneous effect; the driving-wheel went round at double speed, as of course did the shaft also. The halliards tightened, the blocks creaked and strained, and with a sudden start the heavy topsail yard began to ascend.

Steadily it mounted the mast; I watching it as it climbed up foot by foot without stopping, in a quiet easy manner, to me most beautiful to behold. There was no halting, no "Yeo! heave ho!" but a steady continuous ascent. In about three quarters of a minute the yard was close to the topmast-head, and I stopped the engine, made fast the rope, and then fairly danced and shouted aloud for joy.

I had succeeded: all else was but a matter of detail. I had now under my command a power equal to that of hundreds of strong men.

CHAPTER XXI.

I BALE OUT THE VESSEL BY AID OF THE ENGINE.

THE importance of this success in my present position could not be over estimated. The one thing which rendered it impossible for me to navigate the ship was the want of power. By no combination of blocks and purchases, or of the aid of the anvil or capstan, could I

have achieved the feat of hoisting the topsail yard single-handed.

There were many other things, too, which would have been beyond my unaided strength, but which now were easy.

Supposing the vessel were driven on a rocky iron-bound coast, and there was danger of her going ashore, to my certain destruction—in such a case it would be advisable to let go the anchor. But alone I could not possibly get it over the bow, or indeed move it.

Now, however, with the assistance of my docile servant with iron limbs, I did not doubt that I should be able to accomplish it with ease, and also, when I chose, weigh anchor again. I had the strength, the motive power, at my command; all else that was required would be a little ingenuity and knowledge of seamanship, so as to tie the necessary blocks and tackle properly.

I now found the inestimable advantage of the early training of my fine old uncle Captain Copp, at the *Heaven of Rest*.

As was usual with me when, after long suspense, success crowned my efforts, I was too much excited to do anything more that day.

So I shut the furnace door in order to quench the fire, and then went on deck and got dinner. In the afternoon I strolled about the vessel, playing with my beautiful falcon, of late much neglected, and pondering over my future course of action.

I have never regretted this habit of mine, of always laying down for myself a definite course of action, for at least some days ahead.

In the present instance I determined first to distil enough water to last at least a month.

This I calculated I could do easily in a day and a half. Next I would bale out the vessel, not by buckets and by hand as before, but in a more speedy manner with the aid of the engine.

Then, and not till then, would I turn my attention to navigating the vessel and endeavour either to steer her to her destined port, or at all events get in the track of vessels. The procuring water was an easy process now,

all plain sailing: my steam engine still worked admirably, and I congratulated myself on the fact that I need never again suffer from the pangs of thirst.

This done, I turned my attention to the task of baling out the vessel.

First of all, I got up a quantity of coals—about a ton—and piled them on the starboard side between decks, near the engine.

Then I set to work, and having selected a large empty water-cask, proceeded to cut off the head, and rig the rope slings for it, which I passed right underneath the bottom, secured round the bilge, and then left a loop above like the handle of a bucket, to which I could either fasten a rope or a hook.

I now found it necessary to enlarge the hole or well I had made in the lower hold, as, though it was big enough to let a bucket down, it was not so for a huge hogshead like this.

After a good many experiments, I found it necessary to attach a weight of about thirty pounds to the top edge of this my big bucket on one side only; this was in order that when it was lowered into the water it might tilt over and fill. It may seem strange, but it is nevertheless a fact that it took me two whole days and a part of another one before I could sling and weight my hogshead properly.

If I put too much weight on the edge, it would turn right over, and if too little it would float, so, of course, could not fill.

So I had to regulate the weight to a nicety, which at last I did to my entire satisfaction.

This point having been settled, I proceeded to arrange the necessary blocks for the whip or purchase by which I intended to hoist the big bucket.

In the first place, I fixed a large single block on the mainstay, exactly over the hatchway and well into which I meant to lower the headless cask. Through this I reeved a strong new rope—a spare mainbrace it was.

One end I attached to the hogshead, which I lowered down into the water in the lower hold.

On the fore part of the combing or ledge round the

lower hold hatchway, I hooked a snatch-block to a ring-bolt. Through this I passed the other part of the rope, and then took it round the shaft.

Having ascertained that the hogshead had been lowered to the right depth, and was just submerged, I cut off the rope and made the end fast to the shaft.

Now I felt sure that when I connected the fly-wheel of the engine with the shaft by means of the strap, the shaft would revolve, and in revolving would wind the rope round itself: the rope would of course pull up the hogshead full of water, and keep on hoisting it till it came to the block on the mainstay, or the engine was stopped. *Always supposing that the engine had power sufficient to raise the weight.*

I must own that I was in some doubt about this, because the diameter of the shaft was, I fancied, too small in proportion to that of the fly-wheel of the engine.

However, should such prove to be the case, I had thought of an expedient to remedy it. This was to construct a drum or solid wheel on the shaft, and encompassing it, which drum I could make of any size I chose.

Having lit the fire in the furnace, and got a good blaze, I sat down on the deck, ready to shovel on more coal, anxiously awaiting the moment when my theoretical ideas should be brought to the stern ordeal of practice.

I had not long to wait.

In about half an hour there was a good head of steam, as the water was already hot, I having had a fire in the furnace earlier in the day for cooking purposes. I waited till steam began to blow off by the valve, and then started the engine.

Scarcely did the first crank and groan of the machinery fall on my ear, than the fly-wheel began to revolve with considerable speed. At this I was exultant, but my joy was soon changed to dismay when I observed that the shaft did not revolve, and that the hogshead still lay motionless in the water down the hold.

Soon, however, I perceived the cause of this. Some of the chocks of wood with which I had blocked the

wheels of the engine, having been, I suppose, carelessly and insecurely placed, had shifted, and the engine had approached about a foot and a half nearer to the shaft.

This was enough, however, to slacken up the strap so much that it did not bite, and the wheel revolved without effect.

This oversight was soon rectified, for by the aid of a handspike I got the engine back into its proper place, having first of course stopped its action.

The next time I started the engine, the wheel went round at first very slowly, and I saw with triumphant delight that the shaft also revolved, and that the rope was being wound up. Looking down the hold, I beheld the great hogshead full of water slowly rise from beneath the surface.

The weight was enormous, and fearing that the engine might not have sufficient power, I raked up the fire, threw a little coal on, and left the door of the furnace wide open, so that there might be a good draught.

Then, as steam was escaping by the safety-valve, I placed an additional weight on the lever.

The effect of these measures was that the wheel went round at a slightly increased speed, and I saw with feelings hard to describe the great hogshead rise clear of the water, and slowly, steadily ascend.

There was no check, no untoward accident. The big bucket rose to a level with the hatch of the lower hold with a steady and equal motion, passed me, and still ascended, till the lower part was about a yard higher than the upper deck.

Then I stopped the engine, and the hogshead hung in mid air, slowly turning round and round.

Once more I had achieved a complete, a glorious success. All else was now, I considered, but a matter of detail.

The hogshead now hung directly over the hatchway, and as it was necessary to empty its contents on the deck, of course it must be hauled away from its present position, either to one side or the other.

I made a single block fast to the main rigging on

the starboard side, passed a small rope through this, attached one end to the rope by which the cask was swung, and myself standing on the port side, took a turn round the rail by the mainmast, and hauled with all my strength. I found I was able to swing the big bucket over to the starboard side, and so soon as it was clear of the deck, I made fast the small rope to a belaying pin in the rail.

The hogshhead full of water now hung over the deck in the waist on the starboard side, just clear of the hatch.

The next thing to be done was to empty it of its water.

The enormous weight made it a difficult task to tilt it, and I failed again and again in the attempt.

First I tried with a single rope attached to the sling close to the bottom; but although I contrived just to cant it and spill a little of the water, I was very far from tilting it over as I wished.

Next, in place of the single rope, I used a watch tackle, a purchase made by a double and single block.

The double block I hooked in the main rigging a little higher than the top of the hogshhead. The single block I made fast to the slings at the bottom of the cask, and then, using all my strength, I hauled on the fall of the tackle.

This time I managed to tilt it over a good deal more, so as to spill some buckets of water; but do what I could, strain my very utmost, I could not capsize it.

This was awkward, and I went aft on the poop and walked up and down to consider, as was my habit when in a difficulty.

All at once a plan came into my mind, not unfolding itself gradually, but suddenly, completely.

"Eureka!" I cried joyfully, like Archimedes of old; and then felt inclined to laugh at myself for being such a fool as not to have thought of such a simple plan before.

I have said that the hogshhead, nearly full of water, nung suspended at a height of rather more than a yard above the deck.

I got up from the hold a wooden case containing cargo, and placed it beneath the big bucket.

It was just of a size to pass under, leaving a space of a couple of inches only.

I placed it in such a position that only about a foot was under the hogshead, the rest being out on the deck all clear.

Now it was obvious to me that when the hogshead was lowered, one edge would come on the edge of the case, and as a matter of course the cask would be thereby tilted over, and the water poured out without any labour on my part, beyond causing the engine to work backwards and thus let it down.

CHAPTER XXII.

I PROCEED WITH MY BALING.

CONFIDENT of success, I went below, and moving the proper handle, caused the engine to work backwards. Of course the wheel did the same, and the shaft also acted the reverse way, suffering the rope to unwind, and the hogshead to descend.

Almost immediately I knew, by the rushing sound of the water on the deck above my head, that my plan had been perfectly successful, and that the hogshead had been capsized.

One more success! I now began to feel quite boastful, and thought that kind fortune had finally taken me for good and all under her protecting wing, and that I should achieve the like success in all the enterprises I undertook.

Certainly of late I had been singularly lucky. Everything I attempted I had achieved, sometimes not without a little difficulty, but always in the end my success had been complete and unequivocal.

Would it be so always? I asked myself.

And in the instant of triumph, I replied, "Yes, by perseverance, energy, courage, and skill, I will overcome all obstacles as I have hitherto done."

Having found out how to hoist and lower and capsize my hogshhead, I set to work at once.

In the first place I made a mark in the hoisting rope and another in the guy rope to the main rigging, by which I hauled the big bucket from over the hatchway to its proper place, with one edge immediately above the edge of the wooden case.

By watching these marks and stopping the engine at one, and making fast the guy when the other came to my hand, I could always depend on getting the hogshhead of water exactly in the same position. To come up on deck after stopping the engine, when the cask was hoisted high enough, haul it over to starboard by means of the guy rope, then descend to the engine again, reverse it and lower the cask so as to upset it, then again ascend, let go the guy rope, get the empty cask over the main hatch, once more go down into the 'tween decks, and lower the hogshhead down into the hold—all this would be most wearisome, and take up a great deal of time.

So I resolved to devise means by which I could start, stop, and reverse the engine from the upper deck.

There was not much difficulty about this, though it required a good deal of nicety and care. I did it by attaching light lines or cords to the various handles and levers, which I led through blocks or pulleys, so that I could move any handle in any direction, as well as if I were down by the engine.

To each handle I attached two lines, one to pull one way, the other the reverse.

The ends of all these lines I fastened to belaying pins in the rail round the mainmast, each pair having a separate pin.

I twisted pieces of red calico in the lines which would pull the handles and levers backwards, so as to be able readily to distinguish them.

Having made myself perfect by practising for half-an-hour, and finding that I had the engine as thoroughly under control as though I were down below, I set to work, eager to make a beginning of my task of baling out the vessel.

I first made up a roaring fire in the furnace, and then, after seeing everything clear, went on deck and lowered the hogshhead, by pulling the string which reversed the engine. The weight on one edge caused it to tilt over in the water and fill.

Then I started the engine, and slowly and steadily the big bucket ascended as before. At four feet above the deck I stopped the engine, and proceeded to haul the cask over to the starboard side by means of the guy rope.

The precautions I had taken, by making marks in the ropes, caused it to remain suspended over exactly the same spot, so all I had to do was to pull the line which would reverse the engine.

Down came the hogshhead as before, and as one edge landed on the wooden case, over it tilted, and the water rushed out on the deck and quickly found its way to the sea by the scuppers. To roll it back to the hatch and over the combings was only the work of a few seconds, and the lowering of it again did not take more than a minute.

I timed myself by my watch, and found that I completed the whole in six minutes. Beginning from the moment I started the engine, I found that it took two-and-a-half minutes to hoist the cask to the necessary height.

Then there was a minute spent in hauling in on the guy, and getting it over to starboard.

Another minute in lowering and emptying, and half-a-minute in rolling to the hatch and getting it over.

Lastly, there was another minute occupied in lowering it down to the well and tilting, and sinking beneath the surface so as to fill.

This made up the six minutes. It was four o'clock when I commenced in good earnest, and I worked steadily on until seven.

During those three hours I found that I had hoisted and emptied thirty-five hogshheads, so that in fact I had done better than one in six minutes; and that in spite of the fact that it was necessary for me to go below at least four times an hour, in order to stir up and put coals on the fire.

I have spoken of the big bucket as a hogshead.

That is not correct; it was a double hogshead.

The old hogshead of ale was fifty-four gallons; but this particular cask was, as I have said, a double hogshead, and its capacity was considerably over one hundred gallons.

At the rate I found I could fill and hoist—namely, ten an hour, at the least, or one thousand gallons—I should be able to bale out ten thousand gallons a day, by hard work.

Now I had roughly calculated that at this time the vessel's hold contained from eighty to a hundred thousand gallons of water, and, as a consequence, I could depend upon baling the vessel dry in ten days, at the outside.

Nor was I wrong in my calculation. At the end of the eighth day the water had been so far reduced that it was not possible to bring up a full cask, as there was not enough remaining to let it sink completely.

This was on the 24th of December—Christmas Eve.

CHAPTER XXIII.

I AM STRICKEN WITH FEVER.

WHEN I got up in the morning, I noticed that, though it was dead calm, the sky was overcast, and, on consulting the barometer, I saw that the mercury was falling slowly, and altogether it seemed likely there would be a breeze of wind.

A desperate longing had for some days had possession of my mind to get finished with my task of baling, and turn my attention to making sail on the ship, and endeavouring either to reach port or steer for the track of vessels.

I had mentally sworn that I would make an end of this tedious baling job before I turned my attention to aught else—get every bucketful out of the ship I could.

One thing at a time, I made my motto—rightly or wrongly.

This twenty-fifth of December fell on a Sunday, and

it was four months back, to the very day, that the terrible catastrophe had occurred which left me the sole survivor of all the crew of the *Phantom*.

I hesitated, and debated with myself for some time, and finally—I write it with sorrow—I resolved to disregard the double reason the day had for observance, and finish my task of baling.

“Two or three hours will settle the whole matter,” I said, “and then I shall be free to make sail on the ship, if the wind comes fair; and to-morrow I will see about rigging some sort of a jury-mast aft.”

So I went to work.

During the week I had worked under an awning of calico which I had spread over the main hatch to protect me from the fierce rays of the sun.

Of course there was an aperture left for the hoisting rope to pass through, and it happened that this rope had chafed and torn the calico. So I took it down the last thing on Saturday night, intending to mend it, and put it up again on Monday morning,—however, I was too tired, and turned in. The consequence was that on this Sunday, Christmas-day, there was no covering over the hatch, when after a good deal of self reproach, and feeling half ashamed, I fired up the engine and went to work. However, the sky was overcast, and therefore I considered that it was a matter of no importance.

As it happened, however, after I had been at work about an hour, and had hauled up ten or eleven casks full, the clouds overhead dispersed, and the sun burst forth in all his splendour and with all his terrible heat.

To mend the awning and spread it would have taken me a couple of hours, and I did not feel disposed to spare the time, especially as I thought I could get through altogether in about three hours.

So in defiance of prudence I worked on under a blazing sun.

I felt my face and head grow burning hot, and occasionally had a slight giddiness come over me; but to these warning symptoms I paid no heed.

I accomplished the task I had laid out for myself,

and did not desist until the cask came up with only a few bucketfuls, by reason of the water being so low in the hold.

I would not stop even to get dinner, but said to myself that I would have tea, supper, and dinner all in one.

But when I came to cook myself a rasher of ham, and had laid the table for myself in the cabin, I had no appetite—I could not eat a mouthful. So I lit a pipe—fortunately I had plenty of tobacco—and strolled about the deck, whistling for a breeze, and hoping that when it did come it would be from the south-east.

In addition to the heaviness and aching of the head, I had pains in all my joints, and especially across the loins.

My skin was hot, dry, and parched; and again and again a sudden fit of dizziness came over me.

Still I paid little heed to all these symptoms, which should have warned me of the approach of fever—in fact, I was already in a burning fever.

I lay down to rest early, thinking that a good sleep would put me all right.

But, alas! sleep refused to come; and all through the night I tossed and tumbled, till my bones racked with pain, resembling rheumatism. About sunrise I went off into a state of half delirious stupor, and lay thus till two bells in the forenoon watch.

Then I rose; but, in trying to walk, I staggered and fell.

And now the conviction forced itself upon me that I was seriously ill.

I started with horror at the prospect before me. Alone, with no one to tend me, a fierce fever preying on my vitals, perhaps shortly to become delirious! It was, indeed, sufficient to make me shudder.

Already I was tormented with a burning thirst, and I bethought me that when the disease had gathered strength I should be incapable of getting up to procure water or food.

I took the precaution to fill two buckets of water and place them near the head of the bunk I occupied in the captain's cabin.

Then I got up and opened several tins of preserved meat, and left them on the cabin table.

These were for my falcon; for I felt convinced that shortly I should be incapable of doing anything.

The symptoms were unmistakable—I could not walk without staggering—could not see plainly—a mist floated before my eyes, and phantom shapes seemed to mock me.

My hands and face were as hot as fire; my breath came with a crackling sound, and I was racked with pains in every limb. A burning thirst devoured me; my tongue was dry and parched, and my lips chapped.

I now went to the medicine chest; and as I felt certain I was going to be desperately ill, I resolved to adopt a desperate remedy.

I took nearly half a teaspoonful of calomel—a preparation of mercury, and a most powerful medicine. I had heard the captain speak of its power in killing a fever, but was aware that it was a most dangerous medicine, and was quite likely to kill the patient also.

While yet I retained the aid of my faculties, I went on deck. There was a brisk breeze blowing from the S.S.E., just as I wished it.

The foresail was already loosed, and I thought of endeavouring to loose the foretopsail, but, in my present state, I dare not trust myself aloft.

So I contented myself with lashing the helm amidships, and then went below, leaving the vessel to take her own course.

The fever rapidly increased in violence, and by the afternoon I was delirious. Still, I had occasional lucid moments, and knew where I was and what was the matter until sundown.

Then I lost all consciousness, and sank into a state of utter forgetfulness.

* * * * *

When I came to myself it was broad daylight.

I lay still in a dream-like state for some time, and then, remembering where I was and that I had been ill, I endeavoured to rise——

But I found that I could not even lift my head from

the pillow. Then I reached forth my hand, and taking a pannikin, which was by the side of the bed, proceeded to dip a pannikin of water from one of the buckets I had placed there.

The first I tried was empty—so that it was evident I had been drinking while delirious. The second bucket was nearly full; but on dipping the pannikin and endeavouring to lift it to my mouth, I found I was unable to do so.

My feeble hand had not sufficient strength until I had suffered more than half of the water to be emptied.

Then I just managed to raise it to my face.

But I could not lift my head, and the consequence was that I spilled the contents over my face and head—a little flowing into my mouth.

This, however, had a reviving effect, and drawing a deep breath, I lay still and thought.

How long had I been unconscious and delirious?

It was impossible for me to tell. It might be hours, days, or even weeks.

By-and-by, I remembered that I had placed near the bed a bottle of sherry wine and a tin of preserved soup.

I found the sherry bottle, the cork of which I had drawn, and with some difficulty lifted it to my mouth.

I swallowed a few mouthfuls, and then lay quite still for a while. I now noticed that my mouth was very sore, my tongue swelled, and that there was an immoderate flow of saliva.

At first I did not understand the meaning of these symptoms, but afterwards I knew that the soreness of the mouth, gums, &c., was caused by the powerful dose of calomel I had taken. In fact, this potent drug had killed the fever, but had also salivated, and my system was now thoroughly saturated with mercury.

In a little time the sherry wine so invigorated me that I was able to raise my head and half turn in the bunk. I thought that a little food would be advantageous, so reached my hand and took up the tin of preserved soup which I had previously opened. But on approaching it to my face, I found that it was putrid, from having been

exposed to the air in that hot climate. I knew that when I opened it it was quite sweet and wholesome, and I did not think it could possibly become so putrid under some days; so this gave me a slight idea of the time I had been unconscious. The soup being unfit for food, I took some biscuit I had also placed within reach, and pouring some sherry into the pannikin, proceeded to soak it, as my mouth was too sore for me to eat it hard. I soon felt the good effects of this stimulating food, and in the course of an hour or two felt myself getting decidedly stronger.

Looking at my hands, I saw that I must be fearfully emaciated; my fingers were more like ghostly claws than those of a living person, white—almost transparent—showing the blue veins through the pale skin.

I lay perfectly still for some hours; the fading light told me that it was evening; and after again partaking of biscuit soaked in wine, I fell off in to a sweet dreamless sleep, just as twilight faded into night.

I must have slept right off more than twelve hours, for when I awoke the sun was high in the heavens.

I felt wonderfully refreshed, and after a draught of wine and water, managed to crawl from the bunk.

But I was quite unable to walk, being still so fearfully weak; on my hands and knees I made my way out into the cabin. The falcon was on the table, pecking at the last remnants of the preserved meat I had left out for him. With screams of joy, as I thought, he flew from the table and fluttered about my head, the wind from his wings cooling my hot brow deliciously.

I was too weak to get about much, so crawled back to my bunk and again lay down.

During the day I slowly gathered strength, and knew now that the worst was over, and that I was in a fair way of recovery.

It was exceedingly fortunate I had thought to place wine, biscuit, and water within reach, for such was my state of exhaustion that I could not possibly have procured any.

Gradually I gathered strength, and on the third day after I recovered my senses I was able to walk with the

aid of a stick. I was still, however, terribly weak, and though I felt very hungry, and longed for soup and some other food than biscuit, I dared not go down into the lazaretto where there was plenty, lest I should not be able to climb up again.

So I was perforce compelled to content myself with biscuit soaked in sherry. Perhaps, however, on the whole this was an advantage rather than otherwise, as it gave my stomach time to recover its tone, and also allowed the soreness of my mouth to abate.

On the fifth day I thought myself strong enough to venture down the lazaretto, which I did, and safely came up again, bringing with me a small ham, some flour, sugar, and tea, a tin of preserved soup, and some preserved meat for the bird, which of late had been compelled to share biscuit with me, doubtless much to its disgust. It now became a serious question with me as to how long I had lain stricken down by the fever, without knowledge of how time passed.

Going on deck, I perceived that the wind still blew from the south, and that the vessel was gliding along at the rate of two or three knots an hour.

Looking down the main hold, I perceived to my astonishment that there was again a great deal of water in the ship—I calculated about half as much as when I commenced to bale her out.

Here then was several days' work before me, not by any means a pleasant prospect. It was evident that either I had been for a long time insensible, or that the vessel had sprung a leak.

It was Christmas-day when the fever took me. What was the date at this present time?

I could not tell, and yet it was important that I should know, because without the date I could not get the declination of the sun by referring to the nautical almanac.

And without knowing the declination of the sun, I could not find the latitude either by a meridian altitude, or by any other method with which I was acquainted.

This was the sixth day since I had recovered my senses.

How long had I lain unconscious and delirious?

I asked myself the question, but there was no answer forthcoming. This was very disheartening, as I now found myself more helpless than ever, without the means of determining the latitude even.

When the fever seized me, there was a gentle southerly breeze, before which the vessel was going at the rate of perhaps one and a half knots an hour.

There was now also a southerly breeze, and she was going I dare say fully two knots an hour.

Had this breeze lasted during all the time of my insensibility? and had the ship been constantly running north?

If so, how far had she run, and what was the latitude now? Alas! I could not say: puzzle over it as I would, I could think of no means by which to solve the mystery.

I was yet so weak that I could not hope to do any work for some days at least, so I had ample time to think.

Towards evening the breeze failed, and at sundown it was a dead calm, with appearances in the sky which betokened a northerly wind.

I lit a fire in the stove, made myself some tea, and partook of a rasher of ham, which for the first time I thoroughly enjoyed.

Then I seated myself by the taffrail and looked around me, on the wide expanse of sea and sky—alone—still alone—no living thing to be seen for all those miles, over which my eyes swept, save myself and falcon.

The sun went down, twilight came, and then night.

There was no moon, but the stars peeped forth in all their glory; and I sat dreamily looking up at the spangled firmament, wondering whether Polly and my uncle Captain Copp were also looking at the same stars.

Presently, looking to the northward, a certain group seemed familiar to me—a group which I had not seen since when, nine months ago, we had approached the equator after leaving England. Presently I became certain—yes—it was part of the Great Bear; there was what is called the saucepan—two of the stars composing

which were the "pointers," so called because they always pointed nearly direct to the polar star. Following their line I beheld four stars in a double triangle, thus

and one of these I recognized as the Polar star.

Great was my astonishment as I became certain of this; for behold, it was high above the horizon—apparently twelve to fourteen degrees.

When last I was conscious, before being taken with the fever, it was below the horizon, and of course invisible.

The obvious inference was that the vessel had come a great distance to the northward. And here I will say a few words of explanation.

The Pole star is on the North Pole—that is to say, that if we were to stand at the North Pole, the Pole star would be at the zenith, right over head, or 90° from the horizon.

And now we will suppose that the observer goes 10° of latitude to the south (or 600 miles, for each degree of latitude is in reality 60 miles), the Pole star will sink 10° and be only 80° above the horizon.

Suppose he goes still farther south—say to the latitude of London, or 52° N. Now this is 38° from the Pole, because 52 and 38 make 90° ; consequently the altitude of the Pole star should be 52° , which is indeed the fact.

Now let us suppose that the observer goes still farther south, until he comes within 20° of the equator; the Pole star will then be 20° above the horizon, and every degree of latitude which he travels south will cause the Polar star to rise one degree in altitude.

Hence this fact—whatever the altitude of the Pole star, this is the latitude, after a few allowances have been made, for refractions, dip, and so on.

Now it is an easy task to measure the height of the Pole star above the horizon by means of a quadrant or sextant. Hence, whenever the Pole star can be seen, and there is a clear horizon, the latitude can be ascertained very easily and surely.

All this I knew, and at once fetched up my quadrant and took the altitude of the star.

12° 30' N. That was the latitude of the vessel according to the Pole. After making every necessary allowance and correction, I arrived at the conclusion that the ship was in latitude 12° 20' N.—that is to say, that from the time when the fever had overtaken me, when the vessel was nearly on the equator, she had travelled in a northerly direction seven hundred and forty-five miles.

I carefully repeated the observation, and again made all the necessary calculations, so as to make certain that there was no mistake.

I could not sleep the rest of the night for thinking how I could make this discovery useful. I now knew the latitude. How was I to discover the day of the month, and how long I had lain feverstricken and unconscious?

I felt myself on the brink of a discovery. It seemed as though a plan for solving the difficulty was on the tip of my tongue.

And yet I could not grasp it.

The latitude—the declination—the day of the month.

I had the first of these three.

If I could but discover the second, the third would be revealed to me.

At last it came, the plan for which I sought, and which I so nearly grasped with my mind, but could not quite.

Yes, now I saw my way, and if it would but remain calm till noon, the thing was done.

But I will reserve this for another chapter.

CHAPTER XXIV

I WORK OUT THE SUN'S DECLINATION AND THE DAY OF THE MONTH.

As was usually the case with any happy idea which came into my mind, it burst upon me all at once, rushed on my understanding like a flood of light.

I will explain.

I know not whether this record of my perils, hardships, disasters, and solitary life on board the *Phantom*, will ever be perused by human eyes.

It may be the will of Providence, that not only shall I perish, but all record of my fate be lost also. On the contrary, this narrative of my endeavours to conquer fortune to my will, and bear up against a sea of troubles, may fall into the hands of those who may consider it worth perusing, preserving, and mayhap also giving to the world.

Of a surety it is a strange and marvellous tale. Never have I heard or read of any one man or boy left alone on a big ship at the mercy of the wind and waves.

It is in view of the possibility of this account of my adventures being brought to light, that I wish every portion to be clearly understood, not only by the skilful navigator or man of science, but also by the humblest sailor who can read.

Now as to declination.

The declination of the sun is its place in the ecliptic. The sun in the course of the year travels from 22° north of the equator (midsummer in England) to 22° south of the equator (midwinter). Twice it crosses the line, in the spring and autumn.

The declination, then, is its position relative to the equator.

At midsummer in England the declination is 22° N.

At midwinter it is 22° S.

The sun never goes farther north than 22° , and never farther than the same distance south.

The sun attains his greatest altitude at noon; and if the observer be in the same latitude as is the sun's declination, at noon the sun will be right over head, that is to say, at an altitude of 90° .

If, then, where I am is $12^{\circ} 25'$ N. latitude, the sun's declination should be the same: then at noon he will be right over head.

Again, if the sun's declination should be $2^{\circ} 25'$ N., or ten degrees farther south than here, then will the meridian altitude be ten degrees less than ninety, 80°

If the sun's declination should be $12^{\circ} 25'$ farther south—that is to say, if the sun should be on the line—then will the altitude at noon be $12^{\circ} 25'$ less than ninety, or, $77^{\circ} 35'$

Again, if the sun should be 20° south of the line—that is to say, $32^{\circ} 25'$ away from the latitude where I am—then will the meridian altitude be $32^{\circ} 25'$ less than 90° , or, $57^{\circ} 35'$

Now it will be obvious that at noon I shall be able to ascertain the meridian altitude (fortunately for my plan it remains dead calm, so that the ship has not moved since I took the observation of the Pole star), at noon on the day on which I am writing this. It is now about half-past ten in the forenoon (I am obliged to depend on guess, for my watch has stopped).

The declination for every day in the year is set down in a work invaluable to sailors, called the "Nautical Almanac." Of course there is one on board.

Now what I want to ascertain is the day of the month.

Of course if I knew the declination I could tell, because opposite that declination there would be the day of the month on which the sun would be in that position.

Consequently, if I could discover the declination I could tell the day of the month instantly, and to the greatest certainty, by merely referring to the table.

Now by my plan, which was very simple, I should at noon get the meridian altitude of the sun, and from that and the latitude calculate the declination beyond the possibility of mistake.

It now wants only about three quarters of an hour of noon, so I must cease writing, get my quadrant, and prepare to shoot the sun.

It is still dead calm. I don't believe the vessel has moved her position a hundred yards since I got the latitude by an altitude of the Pole star.

* * * * *

20TH OF JANUARY, 1855.—2 P.M.—The date preceding this entry will inform the reader (if ever these lines are read by human eyes) that I have succeeded, and have

ascertained both the declination of the sun and the day of the month.

This is how I went to work:—

I placed myself in a good position shortly before noon, and proceeded to take the altitude of the sun.

I found he was still rising, but kept on continually measuring his angular distance from the horizon, till I knew, by the upward motion becoming very slow, that he was near the meridian.

I had previously adjusted the quadrant and rectified some slight inaccuracy, so I could thoroughly depend upon the instrument.

At last the sun came to a standstill, and I read off the index the altitude, $58^{\circ} 57' 30''$

I waited a little, and again tried; I found that the sun had climbed a little bit higher, but was now certainly stationary. I waited till he began to descend, to make sure, and then read off this second altitude— 59° exactly was the result.

The sun, then, wanted 31° of the zenith, or 90° .

31° farther south than the spot where I took the observations, the sun was on the zenith at noon. That is to say, the sun's declination was 30° farther south than where I was.

Now I knew the latitude of the ship by my altitude of the Pole star to be in latitude $12^{\circ} 25'$

Consequently the sun's declination at noon on this particular day was 31° farther south than $12^{\circ} 25' N$.

This was easily calculated.

To the equator $12^{\circ} 25'$: that would leave 18° and $35'$ south of the equator to make up the 31°

Consequently the sun's declination at noon on this day was $18^{\circ} 35' S$.

The thing was done; and it was with feelings of just pride and a thrill of triumph that I got the Nautical Almanac and proceeded to consult it.

There it was, in plain black and white. I ran my eye along the columns of south declinations from the day when the sun crossed the line at the end of September.

I followed him south, then, when he got to the end of his limit and turned to come back.

At last I came to the very declination I had calculated for noon that day, within a few minutes.

I found $18^{\circ} 33' S.$, and opposite this, January the 20th, 1855.

So this, then, was the day beyond all doubt.

It was hard to credit it; but there was no disputing the stern logic of the quadrant and the Nautical Almanac. I knew that the sun and stars could not lie, and accepted the conclusion as certain fact.

This was the eighth day since that on which I recovered my senses. Consequently that event happened on the 12th of January.

CHAPTER XXV.

I RIG A JURY-MAST, AND AM CAUGHT IN A STORM.

THE fever took me on the Christmas day; consequently from the evening of the 25th of December, 1854, until the morning of January the 12th, 1855, I had been unconscious or delirious—a period of eighteen days.

It was hard to believe; nevertheless I could not doubt it, and contented myself with the thought that though I had lost my reckoning, I had found it again. As if it had kept calm in my especial behalf, so that I might make my observations with every advantage, a light air from the south sprang up very shortly after noon, and it gradually increased until towards evening it blew quite fresh.

I was much too weak to attempt any work at all, too weak even to steer, as my strength was not sufficient to heave the wheel up and down.

So perforce the ship went her own way, steered herself and sailed along wherever the wind blew her.

I decided that at present my sole object would be to recover strength. Then there would be the task of again baling out the ship; then I should want a fresh supply of water; and then if I were alive and well I would set to work and rig some sort of a mast on which I could set sail aft.

Then I would, with the assistance of the engine,

loose and set all the canvas, hoist the yards and trim them to the wind, and set sail for Calcutta, our destined port.

Such was my plan, my earnest hope.

* * * * *

27 JAN. '55.—Another week has rolled over my head, during which I have been doing little else save gaining strength.

A strong steady wind has been blowing from the N.N.W., and with sorrow I observe that the ship is drifting back again towards the equator, and that belt of perpetual calms of which I have such a great horror.

But I could not help it, was powerless to prevent it. I am yet too weak to do anything. The effects of the fever are very slow in wearing off.

Even now, fifteen days after my return to consciousness, I cannot lift a weight of twenty pounds. I cannot walk fast the whole length of the deck without feeling exhausted.

Yesterday I cast off the lashings of the wheel, and bearing it to port, thought to bring the ship up to the wind, so that she might no longer run before it, in a diametrically opposite direction from that I wish.

But I failed egregiously. I managed to get the helm about half over, and the ship began to come up in the wind. So soon, however, as the rudder began to feel the pressure of the water, the wheel flew from my weak hands, and the vessel again payed off dead before the wind.

It will be another week yet before I am fit for anything.

Meanwhile, the water is accumulating in the hold, so that when I do turn to work I shall have several days' hard baling. True I shall do it by means of the engine, but even then there is a good deal of manual labour required.

I have now been alone, on the ocean sole occupant of the big ship, for five months and two days.

I cannot bear to think of it. How much longer—how much longer? Father in Heaven, shall I ever see land again?

The vessel is getting in a very bad state, so far as appearance is concerned. No one who saw her now would recognize the one time smart and trim *Phantom*.

The decks are covered in patches, a fungous growth; the paintwork is dirty, the colours dim; the standing rigging—one time a glossy jet black—now begins to show grey and white, and there are signs of mildew and decay everywhere. I look over the side, and find that she is green with seaweed right up to the bulwarks. It lies quite an inch thick, and lower down there is a great quantity of barnacles, and other shell-fish, which cling to ships' bottoms. I should say that in places the barnacles are nearly a foot in thickness—nowhere less than three inches.

I can, however, do nothing except scrape and mop some of the mildew and fungi from the deck.

The wind has hauled slowly westward, till it is now blowing from the N.W a fresh breeze. The ship speeds on dead before it, exactly the contrary way from that I wish to steer her.

But I cannot help it; am compelled to stand idly by, and be drifted on—on—whither?—perhaps to my doom!

I have been amusing myself with the falcon for want of better employment. He has grown wonderfully tame—will come when I call him, however far he may be, if in hearing.

I have christened him Jack. It is a very pretty sight to see him come swooping down on the vessel from aloft, like a dart from the clouds, when he hears my voice calling him. I have been making him useful also in providing fresh fish for my table.

He has grown wonderfully expert in catching flying-fish, and will sit patiently on my wrist till he sees a shoal leave the water, or hears the rain-like patter, patter, with which they fall again into their proper element, when he will take wing, and hover over the shoal until the flying-fish again rise.

Then, with a rushing swoop, he would come down, and, driving his sharp talons into the back of the largest one his quick eye could discern, he would gently soar

aloft, and then glide down to the deck at my feet, where he would deposit his prey.

Of all the many swoops he made, I never yet saw him miss. His aim seemed unerring, notwithstanding the great distance from which he would sometimes make his dart, and the tremendous pace at which he would go.

These fish formed a welcome addition to the table, and, I believe, greatly expedited my recovery.

I also employed myself in mending the hose for distilling fresh water—I mean the leather covering made of kid gloves—stitching up every hole I could find.

This, and other little odd jobs requiring no hard labour, occupied my time principally, while I was gathering strength.

3 FEBRUARY, 1855.—Another week. I have gained strength wonderfully, and set to work this morning.

The ship has been driving before a strong N.W. wind, until this morning, when it fell calm.

I took an observation of the sun at noon, and I find, alas! that we have again crossed the line, and are now in latitude $1^{\circ} 20'$, say as nearly as possible.

This is not the worst of it. I feel quite certain that the ship has been driven to the eastward a long way, and is now farther than ever from the track of ships.

I now propose briefly to summarize my labours and the results for some time to come.

I have not failed to make daily notices in my log; but these have been of such a nature—hurriedly written, the narrative part mixed up with notes on the wind, weather, barometric readings, observations of the sun, an attempt at lunar, &c., all (except to me, to whom it is clear enough) a chaotic mass—that I think it best to put this my history in a more readable shape.

* * * * *

My first task, was, of course, to clear the ship of water. It had now risen in the hold higher than it ever had before; so that I had before me the certainty of two or three days' hard work, for though the engine did the lifting, there was some severe manual labour attached to it.

It took me half a day to get the engine in order, to clean and oil it, fill the boiler, and lay the fire.

At eight o'clock next morning, after an early breakfast, I started the engine, and went to work.

I had now nearly recovered my full strength, but did not think it wise to overwork myself at the risk of a relapse; so, instead of filling and hoisting twelve hogsheds an hour—one every five minutes—I contented myself with nine.

In two-and-a-half days I had again cleared the ship of water, and was free to turn my attention to other things.

First of all, it was necessary to replenish my stock of water. This done, I resolved to set seriously to work and rig a jury mizenmast, so that I could set sufficient stern sail to keep her up in the wind.

I filled both barrels with water in a day and a half, and then let out the fire in the engine while I matured my plans for rigging the jury-mast.

I chose a spare maintopmast to serve for the jury mizenmast, and thought that if I could manage to get the spanker boom across for a yard, I could then set sufficient sail aft for my purpose.

There only remained about six feet of the stump of the mizenmast above the deck, so I could not get any purchase for hoisting there. I saw that I must depend on the mainmast, and get my purchase from the maintop.

The first thing to be done was to get the heel of the spare topmast to the foot of the mizenmast. This I accomplished after two days' work. My great difficulty was in hoisting it above the break of the poop. This I did by making fast a block in the main rigging, through which I reeved a strong rope. One end I attached to the top end of the spar, the other I let down the hold, and took round the shaft in order that the engine might hoist it.

My iron horse did not fail me; but when I had got up steam and started it, the spar was easily and smoothly hoisted to the desired height.

Then by means of a guy rope which led aft, and by

the aid of the winch on the poop, I hauled the end of the spar towards the mizenmast, and, making fast, went and reversed the engine so as to lower the end of the spar on deck.

I had little difficulty in hauling it aft till the heel was close to the foot of the stump of the mizenmast, as I again pressed the engine into my service.

Now, however, the real difficulties of my task began.

I had to up-end the spar so as to be able to lash it firmly to the remnant of the mast.

In order to do this, I made fast the heel of the spar securely to a ring-bolt at the foot of the mast. Thus this end of the spar was in its proper place. The next thing to be done was to get it upright—the other end aloft.

The top end lay aft, raised on the taffrail.

From the shaft down the hold, which was turned by the engine, I led a rope to the maintop through a block, and then right aft to the head of the spar, to which I attached it. I made fast also to the head of the spar two guy ropes, one on each side, so that the top of the spar could not swing more than a few feet towards either side.

This done, I started the engine, and as the strain came on the rope the top was slowly hoisted until stopped by the guy ropes.

These I then slackened up a few feet, after having stopped the engine.

Then again I started it, and the top was raised a yard or two higher. The heel was made fast at the foot of the mast, and thus, yard by yard, I brought the spar into a perpendicular position.

The guys, one of which led to each quarter, prevented the top of the spar swinging forward or sideways; and in the course of an hour after I had made all these arrangements, the heavy spar was standing bolt upright by the side of the stump of the mizenmast.

My next task was to secure it firmly by lashings to the mast, and also by strong ropes on either side, to serve the purpose of rigging and backstays.

After three days assiduous work, I had the satisfaction

of beholding a jury mast firmly attached to the stump, and well supported by rigging and stays—quite strong enough it was, I considered, to bear any strain which could ever come upon it.

The hoisting and crossing the yard was not a difficult thing now I, had got a mast up on which to rig a fresh one.

At first I had intended to take the spanker boom and make that into a yard, but on consideration I decided that I would retain that in its place, so that I could, if I chose, set a fore-and-aft sail as well as the spare sail on the yard.

The hoisting the yard, and fixing it across at the mast-head, was not a work of any great difficulty, though it occupied some days in setting to my satisfaction.

There were braces and lifts to fix, sheets to be raised, and many other things to be done before the sail could be attached and set.

The spar I had chosen was a spare topsail yard, and there was a topsail down the fore hold which I knew would exactly fit. So far, so good. My jury-mast was all ready, and I waited for nothing now but a wind.

Alas! I waited in vain, day after day passing on with only a few light airs and catspaws.

I occupied myself next in rigging a three-cornered fore-and-aft sail, which spread from the top of the jury-mast to the end of the spanker-boom when set.

This done, I felt certain that I had plenty of sail aft, and waited impatiently for a breeze in order to make sail, and steer to the north-west.

I now proceeded to loose all the sails, in order to dry them in the sun, and repair roughly such as required it.

This I did, and then proceeded to furl them again, securing them to the yards by light stitches which I could cut or cast off very quickly when I again wished to make sail.

Next I set to work clearing up the vessel, scrubbing the decks, and endeavouring by means of a scraper on a long handle to remove some of the vast mass of barnacles which daily increased in number.

But no breeze came. Day after day for a month I waited, and watched, and prayed for wind, all in vain.

Occasionally there would be a puff, lasting for an hour perhaps, when it would die away just as I was thinking of loosing the sails.

On the 3rd of April a breeze sprang up from the south, and I thought that at last my prayers were heard, and that I was really going to sail away from the regions of these perpetual calms and baffling winds.

So in high spirits I loosed all the sails, and in the course of a few hours had hoisted the yards and set every stitch of canvas possible.

Every sail drew, and for a time the vessel glided smoothly through the water at the rate of about five knots an hour. A few days with this wind would see the ship clear of the doldrums, and then I might fairly hope to steer her to her port.

But, alas! I was once more doomed to disappointment.

The wind hauled slowly and surely from S. to S.W., from S.W. to W., and then to N.W., till it was dead foul.

The glass, too, began to fall, and the clouds looked ugly and threatening. I feared there would be a gale, and once again enlisting the engine in my service, proceeded to clew up and take in everything.

It would have been madness on my part to risk being caught in a gale of wind with all sail set; for in such a case it was almost certain that the sails would be split and blown away, or else the mast would go—for of course I, single handed, could do nothing effectual in a gale. Scarcely had I done so when it fell dead calm, and I felt rather inclined to regret having taken in sail, till, going below, I noticed that the barometer was falling at a most alarming rate.

The sky to the southward was of a heavy leaden hue, and I now felt certain that a terrible storm was near at hand.

Nor was I wrong. Shortly after midnight there came a succession of sudden puffs of wind, which as suddenly died away again.

After a time, however, I could hear a distant moaning sound, and in a few minutes a furious blast struck the vessel broadside on.

She immediately paid off before the wind, and away she went scudding at the rate of seven or eight knots—and this under bare poles.

I resolved to let her run till daylight, and then heave her to by setting a part of the triangular sail I had made. So soon as I had close-reefed this and set it, I put the helm hard a-lee and lashed the wheel to.

The ship's head came flying round on the starboard tack, shipping as she did so a good deal of water. The hatches were all safely battened down, however, so no harm was done.

For three days it blew a terrific gale from the north-west, during all which time she lay hove to, riding out the storm gallantly.

Still, I knew that she was drifting at least thirty or forty miles a day. I knew not whither—only that it was in a contrary direction from that in which I wished her to go.

On the fourth day it fell a dead calm again, the clouds cleared off, and shortly the *Phantom* was again tossing on a sea of glass, under the burning rays of a tropical sun.

I took an observation at noon, and found that we were in latitude $4^{\circ} 30' S$. As for longitude, I had no means of knowing with my present knowledge of navigation.

Another week passed on, and I find that I have been seven months alone on board the ship.

Several times I loosed and made sail as a light breeze sprang up, but on each occasion it died away again.

On the morning of the 27th of March I went aloft as usual to have a look round the horizon.

Involuntarily a shout broke from my lips.

Land, ho!

Yes, sure enough, away to the east and north-east I could plainly make out a long line of low coast.

Through the glass I could see mountains inland, covered with verdure, and was sure that the country was fertile.

But what land it might be for the life of me I could not say. I got the deep sea lead and line and sounded.

I found bottom at seventy fathoms. But I also made another discovery—that a very swift current was setting to the eastward.

It was with strangely mixed feelings that I regarded this, the first land I had seen for seven months.

What land was it? To what country did it belong? Was it inhabited? If so, were the inhabitants civilized or savages? These and many more questions I asked myself.

As I could not answer any of these questions, I be-thought me as to what I had better do.

At once the advisability of having the anchor in readiness occurred to my mind, for however anxious I might be to tread *terra firma*, I wished to go at my own pleasure, choosing time and place, and not be driven on the rocks and the vessel wrecked.

Accordingly I at once lighted the fire in the engine, and while steam was being got up I rigged the necessary purchase to get the anchor over the bows. I also got a single block on the foreyard, in order to get the chain cable up.

The anchor was a very heavy one, and, in order to lead the rope to the shaft connected with the engine, I had to arrange several blocks through which to lead it.

This caused a great loss of power by friction and otherwise, and I was scarcely surprised on starting the engine to find that, after half lifting the anchor, there was a sudden standstill.

I now regretted that I had not built up a drum or wheel round the shaft of a larger diameter, so that a greater power might be gained. However, on this occasion I managed to overcome the difficulty by weighting down the valve, greasing all the blocks, and chiefly by making up a very fierce fire in the furnace, so as to cause a great pressure of steam.

These measures had the wished-for effect, and the ponderous anchor was safely got over the bows.

To get up seventy fathoms of cable and range it along the deck was not a difficult, though a tedious operation.

It was evening before I had finished, and the land was still in sight, though more to the north-west. From this I guessed that the vessel was drifting in a direction parallel to the coast.

After dark that night I sat up for hours at the cabin table, poring over charts and books, and vainly endeavouring to decide what land this could be which I had seen.

In the morning it was no longer in sight, nor, though I carefully scanned the horizon from the foretopmast yard, could I discern any.

But that there was land at no great distance I had sufficient evidence.

The sea was of a different colour—no longer of that deep blue only to be observed when the water is of enormous depth.

Towards evening I observed some birds—which, by their flight, I felt sure were denizens of the land—hovering about the vessel. I went and fetched up the falcon, and instantly he saw them away he went soaring up in the air, and presently, swooping down on his victim, brought it on board.

It was about the size of a large thrush, and not unlike one in colour, save that it had a circle of blue and yellow feathers around the neck, and a speckled breast of blue and gold, or orange.

I had never seen any bird of the kind before, so I could not tell its species.

Not having anything else to do; I proceeded to skin the bird for stuffing.

In cutting it open to remove the viscera, I cut open the stomach, and the contents convinced me that I was right in my conjecture of its being a land bird. It seemed that its food was entirely vegetable, as I found nothing but seeds of various kinds and sizes, all of which, however, were strange to me.

I put them on one side while I dressed the skin with salt and pepper, and thought no more of them at the time.

My falcon, Jack, now kept altogether on the wing, and in the course of the afternoon brought me two more

birds—one a small green paroquet, the other like a linnet, only brighter coloured.

The next day again there were several birds about, and again my active falcon captured several.

I invariably gave him all the meat, only keeping the skins and the seeds they had in their crops. I had no particular reason for preserving these latter, and in fact did not bestow any thought on it one way or another.

The wished-for breeze still hung off, and I was tormented by a succession of dead calms, interspersed with delusive puffs of air, lasting seldom more than half an hour.

And when at last a steady breeze did arise, it came from the north-west, dead foul.

I found that it was folly to attempt beating to windward. No matter what ingenuity I might bring to bear, I felt certain that it would be impossible to tack ship, for this is a manœuvre which must be quickly executed, if at all; and though I had power enough at my command, I could not apply it at two or three points all at the same time. Neither could I be at several places at once to let go ropes, shift the wheel, &c.

So I wisely resolved not to attempt anything of the kind, convinced that I should do no good by it. So I caused her to lay to by setting the fore and aft sail on the mizenmast, and lashing the helm hard a-lee, hoping that the wind would soon shift.

But, alas! instead of shifting it died away altogether.

There was no longer any sign of the proximity of land. The sea resumed its former deep blue tint, and no more shore birds were seen.

More calms—perpetual calms—eternal calms, I almost felt inclined to say.

And so time passed on, the ship helplessly, hopelessly tossing to and fro, without wind enough to give her steerage way.

The 25th of April came. On that day eight months back the terrible catastrophe which had reduced me to my present desolate condition occurred.

At this time my attention was called to some alarming symptoms.

Of late I had been in low spirits, inclined to despond, and not altogether without reason. This and the want of fresh meat and vegetables began to tell a tale, and I began to discover in myself symptoms of the approach of that terrible scourge scurvy.

I shuddered at the prospect before me. I had never experienced anything of its horrors, but I had heard and read plenty.

The first thing I noticed was a slight soreness of the gums, followed after a day or two by pains in the joints, which I fancied were slightly swelled.

Lime or lemon juice, when fresh meat cannot be procured, is supposed to be the best remedy; but though I searched diligently among the stores, I could not find any.

There was fresh meat preserved in tins, it is true, but I loathe the stuff, and, besides, had no faith in its curative properties.

It was fresh vegetables I wanted.

The seeds I had taken from the crops of the birds crossed my mind.

"Now, if I only had a bit of land," I said to myself, and smiled at my own folly, "I could soon grow some vegetables. I've no doubt some of those seeds would produce something fit for human food, if they only had a chance. Now I think of it, I noticed that one sort looked like melon, pumpkin, or cucumber seed. I wonder what became of the steward's boxes of mustard-and-cress?"

I remembered all at once that the steward had two long narrow boxes filled with mould, in which he grew mustard-and-cress and radishes for the cabin table.

"If I could only find those boxes and the mustard-and-cress seed, I would soon have greenmeat," I said to myself.

I found the boxes and the mould, but unfortunately could only find about a couple of teaspoonfuls of seed.

However, the idea developed itself gradually.

I said to myself, "It is almost certain that some of those seeds I took from the crops of the land birds will produce vegetables. Growth is very rapid in tropical

climates. If I were to plant them they would probably be sprouting in a week."

The more I thought on the subject, the more I was taken by the idea.

At last I determined I would make an artificial garden.

Aft the foremast there was an empty space on the deck, where the galley and house had been before they had been washed away by the sea. Here I resolved I would make my garden. Should any of the seeds turn out all right, I could very soon raise a quantity.

The soil at first seemed likely to be a difficulty, but that was soon got over.

I remembered that the day before we left Sydney harbour, I, with the second mate, went for a sail in the starboard cutter.

The wind was high, and the second mate thought that some ballast would render the boat both safer and more comfortable.

So some bags and a shovel were thrown in, and we rowed to the nearest shore; and quickly filling four bags with dirt from the land, placed them in the bottom of the boat, and shoved off.

When we came alongside the ship the boat was hoisted up, and the bags of ballast were thrown down the after-hold, where they still remained.

I had helped to fill these bags, and remembered that the soil was principally a rich loam, mixed with a small quantity of fine gravel. I remember thinking at the time what fine rich soil it was. It reminded me of that in the part of the garden where vegetables were grown at the *Haven of Rest*; and goodness knows that was fertile enough.

I at once got up these bags of ballast, and then proceeded to form my garden.

CHAPTER XXVI.

I CONSTRUCT A GARDEN ON DECK.

IN the first place I got four planks, and stood them up edgewise by driving nails into the deck. These planks I so arranged as to enclose a rectangular space, about

eight yards long by five broad. The longer planks ran fore and aft from either side of the foremast, the shorter ones across the deck, so as to enclose the space.

This, then, was to be my garden. I went deliberately to work, and not until after full consideration.

In the first place I spread a very thin layer of earth over the deck. Then, on top of this, I laid about two inches of straw, chopped up and wetted. There was plenty of straw on board, as in many cases it was used for packing; my object in this I will explain. I knew that a great part of the soil is composed of *humis*, as it is scientifically called. This is nothing more nor less than decayed vegetable matter, leaves, twigs, roots, and straw. By wetting the straw and spreading it on a layer of earth, and then covering it with another and thicker layer, I felt sure that it would very rapidly decompose and decay—in fact, form *humis*, or soil. I now proceeded to collect all the animal matter, scraps, and also the sweepings of the cabin where the bird perched at night—this made the finest guano—and mixed with other refuse, I got some bucketfuls of rich manure.

I mixed this with the earth from the ballast bags, and that from the steward's mustard-and-cress boxes. This done, I spread the whole over the layer of straw to a depth of about five inches.

Thus I had a bed of richly manured soil, about seven inches thick. As we had had very little rain lately, I now moistened my bed with fresh water, and proceeded to sow my seeds.

I planted two or three only of every sort, leaving a clear space between each description.

Next I proceeded to mark the place where I had planted each kind by a flat piece of wood, with descriptive writing thereon. I did not know the name of any one seed, so did it in this manner:--

On one stick I wrote—flat oval white seed, size of little finger-nail, 4; on another—round black seed, like peppercorns, 6; again, brown speckled seeds, like small horse beans; another—large round seed, grey, like gigantic pea, 5; very small seed, dark brown, round and hard, about half a teaspoonful. The mustard-and-cress

I also put in, and then prepared to wait anxiously until something should begin to show.

I did not suffer myself to be idle, however. I thought that at times, especially in the middle of the day and early in the afternoon, the sun would prove too powerful, and completely parch up my little artificial garden. So I made a light calico awning, which I could quickly hoist up and lower again.

I believe that even the excitement of the work, and the pleasurable anticipation of the result, did me good, and kept off that threatened scourge, scurvy. At all events, I felt better when I had finished than when I commenced.

The whole affair occupied me about five days, from the commencement, when I sawed the planks forming the edges to the required length, to the completion of the awning.

When I had finished this I found it was necessary to distil some water, for the supply in the cask was getting low, and, besides, I wished to use some for my garden.

This occupied me another day, and after that I found something else to do.

I got an old barrel, chopped up more straw, wetted it and threw it in. Then I collected every scrap of refuse, animal or vegetable, and threw in also—splinters of wood, bits of fat and meat, fish bones, the tails and heads of the flying-fish, the clearings out of Jack the falcon's berth—in fact, everything which I thought might help to form earth for my garden I collected and threw in.

This being done, I could do no more, and perforce was obliged to await the result.

Every morning and evening I watered my vegetable bed, and anxiously looked out for the appearance of something green above the ground.

The mustard-and-cress was the first to come up, and in a week from the day I planted it I cut a small plateful, of which, with oil and vinegar, I made a salad.

There was but a small quantity, and yet it seemed to do me good at once. I was too prudent to cut it all, but

left a little to run to seed, in order that I might get another and better crop.

Meanwhile I took a little salt meat and biscuit, and forcing myself against my taste to eat preserved fresh meat, the taste of which was absolutely nauseous to me, and plenty of vinegar, I thought myself fortunate in being able to keep the scurvy at bay, and was quite content so long as I did not get worse.

Time passed on, and still I appeared no nearer to the goal of my hopes.

Fortune seems to take a cruel delight in tantalizing and playing with me. I had overcome great obstacles had succeeded in almost everything I had undertaken had recovered from the fever, rigged a jury-mast, made sails, planted a garden, and now only want a fair wind to turn the good ship's prow to the nor'-nor'-west, and steer for Calcutta—City of Palaces.

But day after day crawls on, and still the same succession of calms and light baffling winds.

Whenever a breeze does spring up, and last for an hour or two, it is invariably from the north-west—dead foul.

The vessel is slowly drifting to the south and east—I know not whither.

CHAPTER XXVII.

I SIGHT LAND.

ANOTHER weary month has passed over my head ; another month of dreary solitude, with scarce an incident to vary the dismal monotony of my life on board the deserted ship.

Never have I known or heard of such a long continuance of calms and baffling winds. It would seem as though the state of the weather prevails for my special destruction. The approach of scurvy, which I have long feared, is now a certainty. Without fresh meat and vegetables, it is certain that I shall soon succumb to this terrible disease.

There is one faint prospect of relief. It is this: where I have planted the seeds in my extemporized garden, several green shoots have appeared above the surface. The mustard-and-cress has come up, and I have greedily devoured it in the shape of salad. Even this had a favourable effect, and certainly stopped the progress of the fell disease. Should the little sprouts I saw just emerging from the mould turn out to be edible vegetables, I should be saved a lingering death by disease, and might hope to survive until there should be a fair wind.

I had now begun to despair of being able to fetch up to the north-west, and had determined to make for the east and north-east. Since I could not see any chance of my being able to go where I wished, contrary to the prevailing winds and currents, I thought I would leave myself at the mercy of the elements, and sail whither they might lead me—anywhere to escape from this long succession of calms and light winds. Anything must be better than such a life, tormented perpetually by firm hopes, tantalized by partial successes.

It was on the fourth day after I had formed this resolution that, on crawling aloft in the morning, I saw several dusky cloudy specks on the horizon, which I knew to be land.

A light air arising from the southward, I loosened and set the foresail, foretopsail, and topgallant-sail, and, going to the wheel, steered the vessel straight for this land.

My hope and intention were to find some harbour into which I could take the ship, anchor her, and then obtain such supplies of vegetables and fruits on shore as would stop the ravages of scurvy.

Towards noon, however, the wind again failed, and, growing drowsy from the intense heat, I dropped off to sleep, nor woke till near sundown.

I then perceived that, though it was nearly dead calm, the land ahead was much more distinct, and I could make out a number of islands, distant from fifteen to twenty miles.

Obviously, then, though the wind had failed, the vessel had been carried onwards in a north-easterly

direction by some current which must set pretty constantly in that direction.

Were this progress of the ship to the north-east merely the effect of tide, the next ebb or flood, whichever it might be, would float her back again to her former position.

Now this had not been the case, as when I first observed the land in question it was only a little past six in the morning, and it was now seven in the evening; so, as the tide flows six hours in each direction, she ought, according to this theory, to be in the same position, or nearly so.

Now this was not the case, so I had good ground for feeling sure that a current flowed constantly in one direction.

Night closed in—a dark, cloudy, moonless night, so that even had there been land a few fathoms from the ship, I could not have discerned it.

I was unable to sleep, feeling ill and feverish, and it was not till long past midnight that I lay down.

But when I did close my eyes, my sleep partook of the nature of stupor, and the sun was above the horizon when I awoke.

Then what a sight met my eyes!

Looking over the starboard side first, I beheld land—a small island, circular in form, covered with verdure from the narrow slip of sand on the shore to the summit of the little sloping hill.

The island had no trees, but a profusion of small shrubs, grass, and brushwood, all of a most lovely emerald colour.

Indeed, the island looked more like a patch of beautiful green velvet in the deep blue sea than real land.

Turning my astonished gaze to the port side of the vessel, a still more striking sight greeted me.

There lay a large island, with hills, peaks, valleys, ravines, and leaping cascades. The tropical sunrise bathed the whole scene in yellow glory, and for some minutes I gazed entranced.

From the smaller island the vessel was not more than a few cables' lengths.

A light air blew towards it, and there seemed a probability of the ship being cast on the reef which surrounded it.

Turning my attention to the larger island, I vainly endeavoured to discover any living thing; and the thought flashed into my mind that I was the first mortal who had ever beheld this beautiful isle of the sea.

The wind presently fell, then shifted and blew from the opposite quarter, so that the vessel was now drifted slowly over towards the larger island. The passage or strait between the two seemed to be about half a mile wide. The island on the port side of the vessel seemed to be about thirty miles in length, as I could just make out either termination. It lay from S.W. to N.E., and was distinguished by two lofty peaks or mountains, which rose apparently from each end of the island, and were connected by an isthmus, interspersed with little hills, valleys, and ravines—the whole smothered with vegetation. Near the sea, and commencing at the edge of the strip of sand on which the waves ceaselessly rippled, was a belt of dark alluvial soil, teeming with the richest vegetation.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

I DRIFT AWAY FROM LAND.

SEEN from the deck of the vessel, the prospect was magnificent—one mass of green verdure of various tints from beach to the summit of the big and little hills. Over the ridges here and there the more lofty peaks threw great shadows, which minute by minute decreased as the orb of day climbed upward in the vault of heaven.

Half way up the mountain slopes, waterfalls and rushing brooks flashed out in the bright sunlight.

The wind and current together slowly bore the ship nearer to the island, and each minute I discovered fresh beauties in the landscape. At last the vessel was within a few cables' length of the coral reef, which completely

surrounded the island, and I began to fear that she would be wrecked.

Fortunately, however, the course of the stream swept her along in a direction parallel with the coast. The very sight of the green verdure of the place seemed to do me good; and I eagerly looked for some opening in the reef through which I might manage to take the ship, or at all events the boat, and get fresh vegetables and fruit.

Presently I made out a gap in the reef, and as the vessel swept slowly on and came opposite to it, I thought of dropping the anchor to hold her fast, while I proceeded to explore the coast by means of the boat.

Fortunately, I bethought me that it would be well to take the soundings before letting go the anchor. Fortunately, I say, for had I let go I should have lost the anchor and all one chain, as I could not find bottom at eighty fathoms.

Gazing entranced on the lovely scene, I did not at first perceive a gap or passage in the reef; and when I did, found that no efforts of mine would prevent the vessel drifting past.

The wind was very light, and to attempt unaided to beat to windward through so narrow a channel would have been madness indeed.

Just as the vessel had drifted nearly past this place, the slight amount of wind there had been died away, and it was a dead calm.

Now I was indeed in a strange quandary; in sight of plenty, and yet unable to attain anything of what I desired.

I could see the green grass, the beautiful undergrowth, and even discern the fruit on the tall banana trees.

And yet I was perforce compelled to remain helpless, perishing for the want of what I saw in such profusion.

I felt strongly tempted to lower the boat, get into it, put myself ashore, and then let the vessel drift onward whither the winds and waves might carry her.

But my heart failed me, and I recoiled from the attempt.

The ship seemed so like my home, and leaving

would be like severing the last link between myself and civilization, cutting off my last hope of ever again being restored to friends and country.

Then, too, I bethought me of the stores and provisions, firearms, and ammunition, all of which I should have to leave behind me ; for the ship was drifting onwards with the current, and should I decide to take to the boat and go ashore, it must be done at once, as my strength was unequal to a long row, my poor, aching, scurvy-smitten limbs useless for any prolonged exertions.

The case, then, stood thus:—

If I landed I should find myself on an unknown island, fertile, no doubt, but of the nature of which beyond that I knew nothing—nothing as to whether it was inhabited, and if so, whether by fierce and cruel savages, or by men of a reverse disposition.

That there was water and food in abundance there could be no doubt; but it was also nearly certain that if I went on shore I should have to spend the remainder of my existence there, as the ship would drift out into the boundless ocean, and for ever be lost to me.

So, all things considered, I resolved not to desert the ship, hoping that an opportunity might occur of anchoring at some other island, and so being able to go ashore without relinquishing my floating home—my only chance, I considered, of again beholding my native land.

This occurrence, however, had a most depressing influence on me, and I went down into the cabin to avoid the tantalizing view of the land from which the vessel was so slowly but surely drifting away.

Presently I fell into a heavy stupor-like sleep, and when I awoke it was sundown.

I crawled on deck as well as my aching joints would allow me, and found that a light breeze had again arisen, and that the ship had drifted, or had been blown by the wind, far from the lovely island I had seen but was not destined to reach.

To the north-east, however, I discerned dusky patches on the horizon, which I knew to be land.

I might fairly hope to be able to cast anchor, and be able to procure a supply of fresh vegetables.

CHAPTER XXIX.

I SET TO WORK TO RIG PADDLEWHEELS.

ANOTHER month—a month of wearying disappointment, and that hope deferred, which, the proverb says, “maketh the heart sick.”

And yet I have some little slices of good luck.

My scurvy is better. The patch of mould abaft the foremast is now all green with vegetation. The mustard-and-cress has sprung up, and I have allowed some of it to go to seed, which I have again planted. Also, there is a quantity of a running plant which I think, from the leaves, to be a sort of melon-pumpkin, or gourd. It has just come out into flower, but as yet I cannot say what the fruit will be, or, indeed, whether there will be any fruit at all.

There is also another plant, a creeper, which has now commenced to climb up the foremast.

Every morning of late I have cut some leaves of the melon-pumpkin plant, or whatever it is. Of this, and a small quantity of mustard-and-cress, I have made a salad. Fortunately for me there is plenty of vinegar, so this daily allowance of greenmeat has kept at bay the demon scurvy; and instead of getting worse, I am considerably better.

I have managed, too, to supply myself with fresh meat and fish. As regards the former, my falcon, now as tame as a pet parrot, has supplied me.

Land birds, which have been driven off from the shore, or have accidentally taken a flight out to sea, have fallen easy victims to my hunting peregrine. Also, seldom a day passes without his capturing for me a flying-fish or two; so that, all things considered, I have not fared badly, as far as regards food, and have been enabled almost entirely to abstain from salt meat.

But the greenmeat is the one thing which has, I feel certain, saved me from perishing miserably of scurvy; and I need hardly say that I take great care of my improvised garden, by shading it with an awning when the sun is

too hot, and watering with fresh water when for days there has been no rain.

I have made daily observations to ascertain the latitude, and find that at the date of writing this the ship is near the equator, about $1^{\circ} 30' N$.

As for the longitude, I have been studying navigation, and have made several attempts to get it by means of a lunar observation.

I cannot boast of any great success, nor expect to have determined it with anything like accuracy; but I do know that I am within a few degrees of the 170th meridian of east longitude.

Thus, marking this out on the chart, I find that the vessel is now drifting about in the equatorial regions of the Pacific Ocean.

I have seen many islands, and groups of islands, but have not been able to get a good view of any, as it has almost invariably happened that the wind has died away altogether, or blown off the land; and, as I had long ago discovered, it is a dead impossibility to beat to windward.

The currents and tides swept round and in between the groups of islands, but on no occasion for some weeks brought the vessel within a mile of the shore.

So long as these baffling winds prevailed, it seemed that I should never be able either to reach land or escape from these terrible equatorial regions of calms and light airs.

Slowly the conviction grew in my mind that I should never be able to escape and get into the latitudes of the steady trade winds and monsoons, unless I could arrange some other motive power, or get assistance to navigate the vessel.

I dismissed the latter idea entirely from my mind, and turned my attention to the former.

Shortly a scheme unfolded itself which I considered was practicable, and offering a fair chance of success. At first I recoiled from the magnitude of the task, considering the poor means at my disposal and my ignorance and inexperience. It dawned upon me in this way.

One day, when the sea was a sheet of glass—not a breath of wind stirring—I was looking out over the calm ocean towards some islands distant about two miles. All the islands I had seen had been more or less surrounded by coral reefs, with occasional gaps therein. On some occasions I had seen natives going in and out through these passages in their canoes.

Of course they could not fail to notice the big ship, but whenever she was drifted near they fled to the shore in great haste, so I judged that they were terribly alarmed at the strange sight.

This fact, which I noticed several times, emboldened me, and I resolved that, should it be possible, I would navigate the vessel into some harbour, and open up communications with the natives.

There was chance, of course, that they might be cruel and hostile, and that, in spite of all my precautions and the possession of firearms, they might massacre me.

But then I considered that it was but a risk; and as day by day and week by week crept on, and I saw no hope of escaping from my sad condition, I felt inclined to encounter any danger rather than continue to be there helplessly and hopelessly drifted to and fro—a waif on the ocean—the sport of the fickle winds and tides.

So I decided that, let the result be what it might, I would endeavour to make land, and, if possible, get the assistance of some of the natives to navigate the ship.

For I had never relinquished the hope of ultimately saving both vessel and cargo, and taking her safe into port.

As I looked, then, on this land which lay so tantalizingly in view, but to me so inaccessible, even unapproachable, I said to myself, “Oh! that I could command force enough to propel the ship through the water even at the rate of half, or a quarter, of a knot an hour! I should have her completely under my control, and should be able, though slowly, to steer her in any direction, irrespective of the wind—that is to say, if it did not blow too strong in an unfavourable direction.”

In fact, however, there was seldom more than a light

air, and during a great portion of the time it was a dead calm.

At first I thought of trying to work big sweeps or oars by the aid of the engine; but soon dismissed this as quite impracticable. Then I bethought me of a paddlewheel, or two, if possible. The task of making one, however small, clumsy, and imperfect, and arranging to put in gear with the engine, would be a tedious and toilsome one, and the success of the attempt very doubtful.

Nevertheless, the instant the idea had taken root in my mind I determined that it should be done, and forthwith I set about devising a plan.

If the shaft which I had already fixed had been long enough, I could at once have proceeded to build the skeleton of the wheel and fix floats thereto. But it was not so, it being necessary that the end of the shaft should protrude through the side of the ship at least six feet.

First of all, then, I proceeded to pump the vessel dry, and distilled enough water to last me a month.

Then I unrigged the shaft and proceeded to make a hole in the vessel's side between decks, and at a height of about four feet above the level of the sea.

Then I selected a spar long enough and strong enough, and having carefully smoothed and planed it, I, not without some difficulty, contrived to insert one end through the hole I had bored in the ship's side, and thrust it through till about twelve feet protruded; then through a hole exactly opposite I thrust the other end, until on either side of the vessel the spar stuck out about six feet. Next I carefully fixed this new shaft in its position, and having applied plenty of grease about the two holes, I got the strap round the spar and the engine.

When I fired up and started the engine, I found, to my great delight; that the shaft worked easily in its bearings, revolving smoothly and without much friction or grating.

So far so good. My next task was to fix spokes, on which to attach floats or paddles.

Now the reader (supposing that ever this narrative should be perused by mortal eye) must not imagine that I got through all this as easily and as quickly as I write the account.

Each successive step occupied days, and I was more than a week in fixing the shaft alone. The making the paddlewheel was still more difficult, and when it is considered that I had many other necessary duties to perform, besides having to keep a bright look-out, some idea of the difficulty and magnitude of the task may be conceived.

And now as to the details of my proceedings. First I had to cut spokes, each six feet in length. It was necessary to fix these on the shaft—four at the extremity farthest from the vessel, and four close to the side. On these spokes I proposed to fix the floats or paddles. Now, as the shaft was four feet above the level of the sea, and the spokes six feet long, the floats, when fixed across at the ends, would necessarily be immersed about a foot and a half each time that the shaft revolved.

In fact, they would move through the water exactly as do the paddle-floats of a regular steamer—only of course with not so much force or speed.

I fixed the spokes by fitting them accurately into mortice-holes I cut in the shaft or axle.

I further fastened them in as securely as possible by means of wooden stays, ropes, and wedges. When certain that the spokes were firmly fixed, I proceeded to attach the paddles or floats; these were about five feet long by one foot wide. I found plenty of spare deals between decks which exactly answered the purpose. It took me four weeks and a day to finish one wheel, and I had then entered on the twelfth month of my captivity. Eleven months alone on the ocean, without ever hearing a human voice; no companion but my falcon—which now, poor bird! began to droop, as though he, too, were tired of this long isolation.

All the while the vessel drifted about on the broad Pacific. Yet occasionally groups of islands would be seen on the horizon, and sometimes the ship would be drifted within a mile or two.

But I made no attempt to reach land by means of the sails, as I was determined to finish this new enterprise, and decide by practical experience whether it was possible to work the paddlewheel apparatus with sufficient force to propel the vessel through the water. If I could but succeed in attaining a speed of only half a knot an hour, that would be sufficient to give her steerage-way, and I could slowly shape my course over the ocean in a dead calm at the rate of twelve miles a day—a degree of latitude in five days. In fifty or sixty days, then, at the outside, I should be able to reach the latitudes where the steady trades and monsoons blow, even without any assistance from the sails.

Then, too, if it were dead calm, I could, if I chose, steer in through the coral reef, and cast anchor in any one of the lovely harbours I came in sight of.

This, indeed, was my intention, for more than one reason; as I felt that I required some rest and repose after my long-continued exertion, and the terrible hardships and anguish of mind I had suffered. Then, too, I had an intense yearning to have speech and sight of some of my kind—even though they should be nearly naked savages. And I also had an idea of conciliating these people, or enlisting some to aid me to navigate the vessel.

24TH AUGUST, 1855.—A whole year elapses to-day since the disaster which left me the desolate survivor of all the ship's crew.

On the evening of this day I have completed both paddlewheels, and to-morrow I intend to try whether or no my two months of labour have been thrown away.

The ship has been drifting about in a vague manner, but I do not think she has ever been more than a degree and a half from the equator.

Since last night, however, there is a strong north-westerly breeze, and she is going before it, steering herself, at the rate of about three knots an hour.

I let her go, as there are no islands in sight, and I am possessed with an eager longing once more to place my foot on dry land.

Come captivity or death at the hands of the savages,

I care not! I will risk it rather than prolong this dreary hopeless life alone on the ocean.

I had much to do, plenty of work before ^{autumn} The ship is in a terrible state, both inside and out, and you may

Of late I have been too much engrossed with old ^{new} labours, and altogether too weak and ^{Be strong} to wash down the decks, and clear away a mildew ^{and foreboding} which has accumulated in many places.

Aloft, too, things are, if possible, in a worse state: the sails have rotted in many places, the ropes look white and old, and there are other symptoms of general neglect and decay.

Outside the vessel is quite a sight to behold—barnacles, other shell-fish, and seaweed having accumulated to a great extent.

To-morrow I will endeavour, before setting the engine to work, to clear away some of this accumulation, so that my paddles in revolving may have fair play.

Before retiring to rest to-night I shall bring the vessel up in the wind, by taking the helm hard a-lee—~~haul~~ her to, in fact—for I do not consider it either prudent or sailor-like to let her blunder ahead all night, and perhaps go ashore on some island or reef, which is at present, as I write this, invisible.

I now close this entry from my journal. To-morrow is the anniversary of my desolation. To-morrow is the first day of the second year I have been drifting to and fro on the bosom of the mighty deep.

I shall say my prayers to-night with greater earnestness, and beg of the Ruler of Heaven and earth to guide me aright in my future course, and finally to bring me safe to port.

CHAPTER XXX.

I HAVE A WARNING DREAM.

AUGUST 25TH, 1855.—This is the day, a black-letter day, indeed, for me. On this day last year the whole of the crew of the good ship *Phantom* perished suddenly, with the exception of me, Thomas Holt. The strong men were all taken, and I, a weak boy, left.

I have had a dream—a wondrous dream. I do believe, as I write this, that it was in answer to my fervent prayer for light for help and guidance. It was so vivid that I almost hesitate to call it a dream, and am not content for I should not be more correct in saying I have had a dream.

It was at once the cabin was filled with a blaze of light, and that from amidst a radiant cloud there came forth a glorious female figure—that of a young maiden apparently just budding into womanhood.

I saw the dress, and noted every particular with wondering awe and admiration, unmixed, however, with fear.

The dress was pure white. Round the waist was a blue scarf; the sleeves were fastened round the wrist with trimmings of the same colour. There was also a slight blue frill or hem around the dress at the throat, and a profusion of lovely fair hair which strayed over her shoulders was merely confined by a ribbon of the same cerulean tint.

Beyond these ornaments, and a plain silver brooch in the shape of an anchor, this lovely vision wore no other ornament save these said ribbons, scarf, and trimmings.

At first I could not discern the features, by reason of a sort of misty cloud, or halo; but this gradually cleared away, and I beheld, to my astonishment, the sweet innocent face of little Polly, whom I had last seen at the *Haven of Rest*.

I remember feeling bewildered and unable to account for the fact of this being a beautiful young lady, while Polly was a child.

And yet it was Polly—the very same, only that the pretty child had developed into a beautiful girl.

I recognized even the silver brooch—my farewell present to her; and the more I gazed the more I felt sure that it was indeed she. And yet I could not understand it.

At last a heavenly smile came on her features, and she spoke.

“I am Polly,” she said, simply; “and I have come to bid you be of good cheer, to hope on, and to trust in the mercy of Providence. Go on to the south-east: the

wind shall be fair, and in three days you will sight land, an island—beautiful as fairy land. Be cautious and prepared to resist any hostile attack, and you may yet triumph over all perils, and return safely to old England, once more to revisit the *Haven of Rest*. Be strong in heart, but not rash; be forewarned and forearmed. Before trusting yourself to the savage people you will see, the ship should be a floating citadel.”

Then the vision faded away, and I suddenly awoke with her last words ringing in my ears—

“The ship should be a floating citadel.”

I could not get rid of these words. I heard them, as it were, ringing in my ears for hours after the vision had vanished or I had awakened—I know not which to say.

I write this an hour afterwards, while yet it is fresh in my mind, though I do not think I can ever dismiss the memory of that strange communication.

It was just sunrise when I awoke, and after pacing the deck in a state of strange excitement for about an hour, I came down into the cabin, and made this entry in my log:—

“I have determined to act up to the dream warning. The wind is fair for sailing on a south-east course. I shall set sail and steer her in that direction, and, moreover, I will at once proceed to make her indeed a floating citadel.

“I was rash and foolish in the extreme not to have thought of doing so before. Forewarned is forearmed. I accept the warning, and will take care the ship is well armed.

“There is an abundance of firearms and ammunition in the hold, and besides, there are two small cannons.

“I will postpone the trial of my paddlewheels, forbear, for a time at least, to apply steam power, and so have the vessel under control, and devote this morning to arranging a plan for making the vessel a formidable fortress, even with one solitary defender.”

AUGUST 27TH.—A gentle breeze from the N.W. Ship keeping on a sou-westerly course, about two knots an hour. I had been hard at work. In the first place I

found a lot of strong netting and wirework down the hold. With this I had made a barricade all round the ship, from the bulwarks to a height of ten or twelve feet. In fact, I have extemporized what are called boarding nettings on a man-of-war. That is to say, nettings to keep a boarding party from getting a footing on the deck.

Now I know well that this alone will not make the vessel impregnable, but it will have the effect of delaying any enemy who may attempt to take my ship by the board.

In time, in a very few minutes in fact, the netting might be torn down or cut; but that time would give me opportunity to bring my firearms to bear, and I am of opinion that I can give a very good account of even a numerous foe.

In the first place, I got up a lot of guns, fowling-pieces, and rifles. The former I loaded with large shot, and then proceeded to practise by firing at a mark on a board, hung from the yardarm, the size of a man.

I found that at the whole length of the ship I never missed hitting this object when the guns were loaded with such shot.

On every occasion a number of shots struck the board, and a greater number flew about all round, so that at every discharge I could depend on wounding several of the enemy, if they attacked in a body.

Next I tried how many shots I could fire in a minute. I loaded a dozen fowling-pieces carefully, and then, snatching them up one by one, fired in rapid succession. I found that I could with ease fire fifteen in a minute, without missing my experimental target. Thus, then, I can depend on hitting a man each shot, if they come over singly. Probably, however, they would attack in a body, if they did at all; and in that case I might very likely hit thirty, all of whom would receive painful wounds.

Now, there are some men brave enough—English soldiers, for instance—who will still advance in spite of any wound which does not disable them utterly; but I had never heard of savages, however ferocious and cruel,

performing such an act of valour—except, perhaps, Red Indians, than whom there could scarcely be people less like than these islanders of the tropical Pacific.

Next I turned my attention to the rifles, and practised all one afternoon. Of course, it was necessary to take a more steady and deliberate aim with these arms of precision; but though I could not fire so often, I yet found that I could, after a little practice, hit the man-sized target every time.

A wound from the conical bullets of the Enfield cartridges would be a very different thing from that of a few large shot; the former would inflict a fatal, or, at all events, disabling hurt, wherever it struck, so that in case of attack I could be guided by circumstances. If they came on one by one, or there was no fear of a sudden rush of a large number, I should probably single out my man—some prominent chief—and shoot him.

Most likely I should blaze away at the canoes as they came on to the attack, and could thus begin killing my enemies while several hundred yards away. Then if they stood, say, the fire of twenty or thirty rifles, many of the bullets from which must necessarily wound or kill some long before they could reach the ship, I should, as they got close, blaze away at them with the double-barrelled fowling-pieces, loaded with slugs and swan-shot.

I calculated that it would take at least two minutes for every possible attacking force to break through my defensive boarding-netting in any considerable number.

And in two minutes what havoc should I not be able to play among a crowd of naked savages?

What groans, yells, and shrieks of pain would be heard as the leaden slugs and big shot plumped into the bodies of the attacking foe!

That they would press up the attack I did not believe. Even, however, if the severe handling I was certain I could give them should still be insufficient to check the attack, I had yet other and more terrible means at hand to inflict slaughter.

It may seem to some who read this (always supposing that I survive this strange adventure, or that my journal and narrative, founded and extracted therefrom, ever

comes to civilized hands) that I am writing in a very cool and bloodthirsty manner of killing and wounding my fellow-creatures by scores.

But this must be borne in mind : if it should happen that the ship be attacked by savages, it will be for the purpose of killing me, perhaps by horrid tortures.

Now, they say, and truly, that "self-preservation is the first law of nature." For my part, were my own life at stake, I would, in defence thereof, slay and maim any amount of men, savages or civilized ; and I think the vast majority of mankind are of my way of thinking.

Now, then, for the other arrangements I wrote of, not yet all completed.

I have spoken of two small cannon which were on board, probably more for the pacific purpose of firing signals for a pilot or so forth, than for warfare. However, there they were ; and I determined that I would make them useful, if needful, for the destruction of my enemies.

After a little consideration, I devised that I could make the poop and afterpart of the vessel my strong point. From there, surrounded by my loaded firearms and cannon, I could carry on the defence, and, if necessary, prolong it, and sell my life right dearly, and fall amidst the dead bodies of many foes.

The little cannon, then, I got upon the poop, and so placed them one on each side that I could sweep the forepart of the deck with their fire. I would take care that they should be loaded nearly to the muzzle with bullets and grape, and did not doubt but that I could cause terrible havoc if any considerable number should gain a footing on the deck forward.

In order that the attempt, if one were made, should be on the forepart of the vessel, I made my defences on the afterpart much stronger.

In addition to the fowling-pieces and rifles, there were revolver pistols, each with six barrels. Now, with two or three of these deadly weapons in my belt ready for use, I could, as the last resort—even if an enemy's force gained the deck in spite of the successive discharge of guns, rifles, and cannon—take up my stand

with my back to the mast, with nearly a certainty of being able to kill or wound at least a dozen.

All things considered, I had little fear for the result, unless I should be taken by surprise ; and I determined to use every possible precaution against such a thing happening.

These were, in brief, the various defensive measures which I had adopted.

It may seem strange that I should take such great pains merely in pursuance of a warning dream.

But the said dream greatly impressed me, and did now, two days after it occurred, and when, it might be supposed, the effect would wear off. But, on the contrary, I felt every hour more impressed by it.

The wind continued steady, and I have kept the vessel on a south-easterly course, in accordance with what Polly told me in the dream.

To-morrow is the day mentioned when I shall sight land. I have every confidence that it will indeed so turn out.

CHAPTER XXXI.

THE RESULT OF MY DREAM.

28TH AUGUST, 1855.—A light and pleasant breeze from the northward. The vessel going steadily through the water at the rate of about three knots. She has been going for three days at the same pace and in the same direction, and has traversed considerably over 200 miles.

I occupied myself all the morning in clearing up the deck a bit, laying the fire in the furnace of the engine, and doing other little odd jobs.

For some time past I had paid but little attention to my vegetable garden, as I had been too much busied with other matters.

On looking closely into it I found that all the seeds had germinated, and that there was now quite a luxurious growth of various plants, of the nature of which I knew very little.

It was sufficient for me, however, that none of the leaves of the plants, of which I had partaken every day in the shape of salad, were poisonous or injurious, but, on the contrary, had great antiscorbutic properties.

There could be no doubt that the symptoms of scurvy had abated, although I still felt pain and tenderness of the joints and mouth and gums.

But I could hardly expect to be suddenly cured, and felt grateful that I had succeeded so far in warding off the threatened scourge, and even greatly moderating the symptoms.

I have no doubt that the fact of my having plenty to do and think about—hopes and plans for the future to look forward to—tended, by keeping the mind cheerful and occupied, to act beneficially on the body.

My conjecture as to some of the plants being of the nature of a pumpkin, turned out to be correct. Four small flat oval seeds, not unlike those of a melon, had produced a profusion of wide-spreading green leaves, amongst which, in due course, yellow and black flowers had appeared.

The next step was for these flowers to bloom and fade away, leaving behind a number of small pods about the size of filberts.

But during the last fortnight some of these pods had grown with amazing rapidity, and I found, hidden among the leaves, several (fruit or vegetable) of a dark green colour, speckled with black. In shape they were something between a pumpkin and a cucumber.

I cut one, and instantly set to work to test its edible properties.

In the first place I sliced a part of it thin, and then tasting, found it not to be unlike cucumber in flavour.

Then I gave myself a treat, which I should never forget.

Thirty or forty slim slices, with pepper, salt, and vinegar, taken with bread and cheese, made such a lunch as few ever enjoyed as did the unfortunate waif of the ocean who now records his adventures.

For dinner I repeated this, and can safely assert that the cool juicy vegetable had an almost magical effect.

I felt as though new blood, new life, had been instilled into my frame, and could now understand what I had heard from old sailors, but which hitherto I had laughed at as an exaggeration.

This was, that the very sight and smell of certain fruits or vegetables—the lemon, for instance—seems to have power to stop the ravages of scurvy; and men who had been at death's door, covered with sores, and almost in a putrefying state, have been known to recover completely after a few days' diet on abundant vegetable food and plenty of lemons to suck.

So well was I satisfied with this result, that I at once determined to pay greater care and attention to my garden. So I gathered some other of the fruits, and submitted them to the test of tasting. There was a small fruit or vegetable, about the size of a walnut, which had a sharp acid taste, rather pleasant than otherwise. The consistence and general appearance of this was like that of an unripe green plum. It had, however, no stone, only a small kernel.

Again, I found, on pulling up some of the green stuff, that the small black seed had produced roots in shape like a radish, but hot and pungent. These, I thought, would serve admirably as a relish or condiment, though too fiery to be eaten alone.

Again, there were two sorts of creepers, which had climbed and fastened about the foremast in a manner which, had I been less occupied with the stern realities of my position, would have excited my admiration. As it was, the clustering mass of leaves and tendrils had quite a refreshing effect on the eye.

Some of these creepers had pods on them somewhat like those of French beans; but at present very small and tender. I picked a handful, and to test their quality, boiled them in fresh water with a little salt. They were excellent—quite equal to the best French beans—but more soft and succulent when cooked, more like young marrow-fat peas in flavour.

Here was a wonderful acquisition. If it should be my fate to be buffeted about the ocean for many more months, I had the prospect before me of plenty of

fresh vegetables; for, of course, I should take care to let some of each variety run to seed, so as to insure a fresh supply. Already my garden had furnished me with a vegetable equal to cucumber, another like French beans, and a third like horse-radish; and a small acid fruit like a sour plum. I could not tell what other bounties this little patch of earth on the deck of the ship had in store for me; but resolved to pursue my investigation, and accurately examine each particular specimen.

There was another plant, with broad round leaves, which spread like large plates over the ground; and I judged that this was also a kind of pumpkin, gourd, or something of the sort. It had only just come into flower, however, so I could not guess even as to what it was. Then, again, I find, peeping from the ground, slender blades, which I thought would one day mount up into sturdy stalks and bear some kind of grain. The thought of what an excellent thing such would be, if indeed the case, set me thinking, and wondering whether there was not any grain on board amongst the ship's stores, which I could plant and make grow.

I went through the list of all the grain I could think of repeating one at a time, and questioning myself whether it was likely there would be any on board.

"Wheat?" I asked myself.

No; there was flour, but no wheat, that I was aware of.

"Oats?"

"No."

"Rye?"

"No."

"Barley?"

I remembered that on leaving England we had a supply of fowls on board, also ducks, and that it had been sometimes my duty to feed them. The fowls had barley given to them, and scraps and crumbs from the cabin table.

The ducks are fed on paddy, a species of rice with the husk on, and also barley-meal and water.

Now, I used to get both paddy and barley-meal from

the steward; but where he had his supply stored I did not know. At all events there was a chance that there might be some left—a very great chance, I thought; and should such be the case, I was determined to find it, and forthwith set about the task.

I got lanterns and took them down to the lazaretto, or store-room, and commenced to turn over every box, case, barrel, and bag, to find it out.

At last I found a bag of paddy, which had been concealed by reason of some cases having toppled over in the storm and covered it.

Eagerly I hurried on deck to inspect it and see whether it was in a condition to grow. I knew that when we left England, nearly a year and a-half back, it was still fertile. I had noticed that some seeds which had got jammed in a wet place had begun to sprout and germinate. It was possible that the germ was still active, and that under favourable circumstances the seed would do so again. The only way to prove it was to sow some, which I carefully proceeded to do.

Even now I was not satisfied, and would not give it up, but again went down and searched, till I succeeded in finding about twenty grains of barley. These I handled as though they were diamonds, and proceeded to plant five. This was in order that if the soil did not suit, or I had made any great mistake in my agriculture, I might have other grains as a reserve.

By the time I had done this and cleared up the deck, evening was approaching. I grew restless and uneasy.

This was the third day, the day on which, according to my dream or vision, I should sight a lovely and fertile island.

Restlessly I wandered about the deck, up aloft with spyglass, then down again, and so on, until the sun sank close to the horizon.

Then I bethought me of supper, and went down into the cabin to prepare it. I was longer than usual about it, as I resolved to take a portion of vegetables and salad with every meal now, in order to work the scurvy completely out of my bones.

I dare say I was half an hour in preparing supper,

which consisted of hock of ham, soaked biscuit, a little fat and seasoning tea, and a salad, with which I designed to finish up.

I went on deck before sitting down to the meal, and with eager eyes scanned the south-eastern horizon. A mist or haze had lain there when last I looked, but now it had cleared away, and in an instant the glad shout "Land ho!" broke from my lips.

I felt wonderfully pleased and excited, and could not make up my mind to go below and eat my supper until the shadow of night had hidden the distant hills, peaks, and valleys from my delighted gaze.

It appeared to be about twelve or fifteen miles off, but nevertheless, it seemed to me, notwithstanding the distance, to be a beautiful island, clothed with verdure and fertile, with lovely hills and valleys, from the beach to the summits of the inland peaks.

I slept little that night, and was aloft at first break of day, eagerly looking out for the island, for such I knew it must be, or one of a group—for there was no large continent in those latitudes.

Immediately after breakfast I was down the hold cleaning and oiling the engine, putting the last finishing touches to my paddlewheel machinery.

The land was still in view, but it had fallen a dead calm during the night, and as I had hove the ship to before going below myself, it seemed in about the same relative position as before. This I was rather pleased with than otherwise, as I wished to get everything in perfect order, so that there should be no chance of a failure. Hitherto I had succeeded in every enterprise I had undertaken on board; my distillery apparatus worked admirably, so did my iron horse in pumping the ship out, and other work. By the way, I must mention here one defect in my arrangements, which I could by no ingenuity obviate. When I had fixed the new shaft or axle right across the 'tween decks, I had removed the other, or smaller one, farther forward, so that when I wanted to use this for hoisting, it was necessary to move the engine also, so as to approach it to within the right distance for the endless band or strap

to fit over both properly. This occupied a good deal of time, and I had, besides, to shift and move all the old nets, leading blocks, and tackle I had rigged.

On the whole, however, this engine of mine, as far as doing its work was concerned, was a great success. There remained a third success, which, though simple, was of great importance; for it was this same garden which arose out of so trifling a circumstance as my taking it in my head to preserve the skin of a bird, which prevented me from perishing miserably of a terrible disease.

It remained calm all day, or nearly so, and I so arranged the sails as to keep the vessel about in the same position relative to the land, for I did not wish to approach until everything was prepared—anchors, best bower and sheet, over the bows, and chain cables bent. Also, I got out a rope hawser and a small anchor, called a kedge, at both bow and stern, so that I might be able to let go at any moment and stop her way if she were in danger of drifting on a reef. For this purpose the little kedges and hempen hawser would be a great deal handier than the big ones, and probably quite as safe.

I spent all that day in making my preparations, and in the evening had got a good deal of steam in the boiler.

All was now in readiness for the experiment which should demonstrate whether I had failed in this my last and, I said to myself, almost audacious attempt.

Who ever heard of a mere lad attempting, alone and unaided, to transform a sailing ship, scarcely better than a deserted hulk, into a steamer, with the advantages pertaining thereto in a minor degree?

I said to myself, the time is come—the eventful moment which will probably decide my fate. Then, with hand not over steady and beating heart, I raked up the fire, threw some fat on to make the blaze fiercer, weighted down the safety-valve, and then—then I pulled the lever which admitted the steam into the cylinder, and stood breathlessly noticing the result.

The machinery clanked slowly and laboriously, and the engine gave a few angry snorts, as it seemed to me.

The shaft went round slowly—very slowly—too

slowly. I gave the fire another poke up, threw on more coal and fat, oiled the bearings, and then rushed on deck, panting with excitement, and looked over the side to see the paddles revolve in the water. For about a minute I stood thus, entranced.

The paddles revolved, but the sad fact soon dawned upon my mind that there was something wrong—that I had expected too much—and that failure awaited me. And then when, finally, the paddles stopped altogether, and the engine ceased to work, a great sob escaped me, and I felt as though my heart would break.

Was it indeed possible that all my toil and ingenuity had been to no effect—that I had failed?

Alas, yes! So it seemed.

* * * * *

As is usually the case with me on becoming aware of any untoward event of magnitude, sufficient to be classed as a misfortune, I lapsed into a state of thorough despondency. My spirits seemed suddenly to have received a numbing shock, my heart weighed down by a crushing weight.

Fortunately, however, this state of semi-despair did not last long. Gradually I began to consider and think out, if I could, the cause of this failure. Then I consoled myself by saying that it was not an utter failure; that the engine had actually turned the shaft; and that the paddlewheels had indeed and in truth revolved.

Perhaps the engine was out of order, or there was some fatal defect in my rudely knocked-together machinery, which might be remedied.

Hope whispered these encouraging words in my ear. After a little while I said, "Nil desperandum—never despair; while there's life there's hope!"

After giving utterance to the above sentiments, I descended the hold, and went to work to discover the cause of failure, and, if possible, remedy it.

I quickly discovered the cause; as to the remedy, that was not quite so easily to be got at; but the more I pondered on it, the more I was of the opinion that I could cure the defect, and ensure ultimate success and a genuine triumph.

The cause was this :

The shaft which was turned by the strap connecting it with the large wheel of the engine was proportionately too small in diameter for that of the engine wheel. By increasing the size of this shaft or building a drum around it at the place where this strap encircled it, this difficulty could be removed; and on the well-known principle in mechanics that where "time is lost power is gained," the paddles could be made to revolve steadily, a little more slowly, but with greater power.

There was another reason why the paddles did not work, which I afterwards discovered. The diameter of the shaft or axle being so small, the strap had not sufficient grip, and consequently slipped a good deal; hence a great loss of power.

I now went at it with a will, determined that, if success could be purchased by perseverance and hard work, I would succeed.

I made a drum or wooden cylinder round the axle, so as to increase the diameter by about one-half, which I judged would be amply sufficient. When once I had decided on the mode in which I could make the drum, I soon finished it: for though not brought up to the carpenter's trade, I found that urgent need and being thrown on one's own resources wonderfully sharpen the faculties.

Never was there a truer proverb than that which says, Necessity is the mother of invention.

I managed this in a very simple manner. I got some battens or small pieces of wood, a little longer than the width of the strap: these I proceeded to affix all round the shaft in a longitudinal direction, that is to say, parallel with its long axis. I kept adding others on the top until I had built up around the shaft a drum of sufficient diameter, as I thought.

Having carefully smoothed and planed this built-up drum, I again got the strap over the fly-wheel of the engine, made up the fire, and got steam up.

Once again I watched the shaft revolve—this time steadily and without difficulty.

Again I ran up on deck, and leaping up on the rail, saw, with wild delight, which no one but myself can

possibly realize, the paddlewheels go splashing into the water.

When, after a minute or two, I saw the vessel gather headway by degrees and commence to forge slowly ahead, my joy was greater.

Finally, when I ran to the wheel, and observed that she answered her helm, and was going ahead steadily at the rate of about a knot or a little more an hour, the intoxication of my triumph carried me right away.

I shouted for joy, ran about the deck, and danced like a mad thing. The steady rumble of the machinery, and the measured splash of the paddles, made up the sweetest music which had ever fallen on my ears.

I ran below to the cabin, got a bottle of wine, filled a tin pannikin of it, and drank my own jolly good health, drank the engine's jolly good health, drank the jolly good health of the paddlewheels, the ship, the distant land, the inhabitants whoever they might be, and, in fact, behaved more like an intoxicated lunatic than a solitary waif on old Ocean's bosom, with still unknown dangers to face, unknown difficulties to overcome.

But I think there was some excuse for me, as the success was undoubted and complete, as evidenced by the steady splash of the paddles.

CHAPTER XXXII.

I APPROACH THE ISLAND.

BEAUTIFUL isles are the bright gems of lovely verdure dotted down in the midst of blue old Pacific, whose waves ceaselessly ripple on bright sandy shores, or tumble in white foam over the coral reefs.

Islands of the great Pacific, very paradise of luxuriant vegetation, soft breezes, warm blue sea, and azure skies, where no biting frost or piercing winter's blast nips the tender plant, and causes mankind to shiver and press round stoves and fire.

Regions of eternal summer, the land teeming with animal and vegetable food for man, the seas swarming with fish.

I have seen these earthly paradises, and yet I yearn for the stern old chalk cliffs of old England, and would rather look on old Bristol's ugly quays, wharfs, and warehouses, than all this scene of beauty.

But this is a digression from my story, which I will now proceed with, refreshing my memory by frequent reference to my log, on which this narrative is faithfully founded.

On the day when I achieved the grand success of the paddlewheels, I was too much excited to do much. And then, too, I own it with shame, in my enthusiasm I drank too much wine, which presently had the effect of making me quite sleepy and heavy in the head.

So I stopped the engine, and throwing myself on the deck at sundown, went off sound as a rock.

When I awoke the moon was shining brightly, and, consulting my watch, I found that it was two bells in the middle watch, an hour past midnight.

It was beautifully clear weather, and myriads of stars, adding their light to that of the moon, enabled me plainly to distinguish the distant island, in my eyes a very Promised Land.

I walked the deck till dawn, smoking my pipe, and enjoying the serenity of the lovely night, and my own pleasant thoughts of future triumphs and final escape.

All nature seemed hushed to repose, to the music of the waves gentle wash against the vessel's side.

There was a light breeze from the northward, and the vessel was drifting down slowly towards the land.

I permitted this because it suited my purpose, which was to approach the land and then get up steam, and, if the wind was fair, make sail also, and proceed on an exploring expedition for a harbour and passage in the coral reefs which surround nearly entirely most of the Pacific islands.

At daybreak I lit the furnace fire, and then proceeded to get breakfast.

After this important process, I got the ship before the

wind under the foretopsail, jib. I did not set more sail, as I merely wished to keep her moving slowly on towards the land while steam was being got up.

By noon the breeze had died away, and it fell a dead calm; and then it was that I first made practical use of the new force at my disposal.

I got up as heavy a pressure of steam as I possibly could, and taking my post at the helm, steered the ship direct for the land, distant then, apparently, from three to four miles.

There was a slight current setting in the same direction, I fancied, which accounted for the vessel nearing the island faster than I had anticipated. I had my work to attend to, all that was necessary, besides steering the vessel. Every few minutes I went aloft to see if there were any reefs in the sea ahead.

On one occasion I discovered a dark patch over which there rose occasionally white water.

I avoided this easily—the ship answering to her helm at once.

Then I had besides to run down below every few minutes, to put coal in the furnace, and see that all was going on right.

When within half a mile of the reef, which enclosed the lagoon of smooth water between that and the shore itself, I stopped the engine, and taking my spyglass, went aloft, and looked round on the prospect. The more I gazed, the more I was struck with admiration at the beauty and verdure of all the land I saw.

A very brief examination told me that the island was inhabited—for I saw huts, apparently a village, and canoes drawn up on the sandy beach.

There was a strip of white sand all along the shore; then came a slope of green grass and other vegetation of various tints. Then came ridges and gulleys, and little hills gently sloping inland on to a sort of plateau or flat plain.

Higher up was a forest of trees of many kinds. I could distinguish palm, cocoa-nut, plantain, banana, and others with which I was not acquainted.

The forest sloped gently upwards to the mountains,

the trees reaching to the top. Along the shore steep ridges shot up into the sky.

I stood for near an hour gazing on the scene, and then came down to start the engine again, and steer for the other side of the island, as I fancied that the harbour must be there.

The coast of the island along which I was now sailing, or rather steaming, looked northward, and lay east and west.

Outside the reef the surface of the sea was gently undulating with a gentle ripple, caused by the current and light air.

Within the lagoon the water was smooth as glass—a lovely lake, teeming with fish.

I judged it safer to keep a reasonable distance from the reef, on account of sunken rocks or other dangers beneath the surface.

The distance between the reef and the shore of the island was nearly a mile, and as I kept half a mile outside, I was too far removed to distinguish small objects. I did see moving things, however, and I had little doubt they were men and women. That it was inhabited I was quite sure. There is an indescribable something about the appearance of an inhabited country, even from a distance, where houses and villages cannot be seen, which announces to the observant eye the presence of man.

In this case there was a certain order apparent in the lovely landscape. The foliage and vegetation were abundant enough; but there was in places a symmetrical appearance about the trees and the green patches which suggested the guiding hand of man.

I found by experience that when once there was a good head of steam in the boiler, it was only necessary for me to put more coals on the furnace of the engine once every quarter-hour, or thereabouts.

Before firing-up I used to get a sufficient quantity within easy reach; so that it did not occupy me more than a minute to leave the wheel, run below, fire-up, and return to my post.

The paddles worked admirably and smoothly, the

musical hum of the machinery and the dull splash of the floats in the water keeping up a perpetual melody, sweet to my ears, accustomed as they had been so often and so long to a dismal silence, broken only by the creaking of masts or cordage, or my own voice.

The motion of the vessel through the calm water was slow but steady; and as I stood at the helm, surveying the whole scene, I thought to myself what would not be the astonishment of my uncle, Captain Copp, or, indeed, any one, to survey me in my present position.

In good truth the *tout ensemble* was extraordinary and melodramatic in the extreme. I was at the wheel, on either side of which, in a rack, leaning against the rail, were four loaded guns.

Behind me, too, there was a stand of six rifles and some boarding pikes, so arranged as to be readily at hand.

A few paces forward was my grand arsenal of guns, rifles, and revolvers, arranged round the mizenmast, and laid on the deck in such a way as to be immediately at hand.

Farther forward stood the two small cannon, with a little heap of ammunition alongside each; and about the deck, apparently strewed in confusion, but really all placed for a purpose, were cutlasses, guns, cartridges, and other things adapted for the defence of the ship.

Around the bulwarks were the boarding nettings, and wire fencing; and, altogether, the vessel presented as extraordinary an appearance as it is possible to conceive.

Quite certain am I that neither captain nor owners would have ever recognized the one time taut clipper-ship *Phantom*.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

I MAKE OVERTURES TO THE NATIVES.

ABOUT two hours after noon, on rounding the eastern point of the island, other islets to the south came one by one in view, and I judged that this was probably but the principal one of a considerable group.

After having satisfied myself that there were no reefs or sunken rocks ahead, I turned the vessel's head to the south, and kept an eager look-out for an opening in the reef. I had just come up from putting more coals in the furnace of the engine, and doing two or three little odd jobs down between decks, which had kept me longer than usual from the helm—perhaps ten minutes—when, on looking ahead, I perceived two canoes with men in them. They were about half a mile from the ship, and were not paddling, seemingly terrified and astonished at the monstrous object bearing down on them. I could not say whether they had ever before seen a vessel, but am quite certain that they never beheld anything like this.

Well might they stand up in their canoes, and by wild gestures signify their amazement and terror at beholding the battered old hulk of a vessel, almost a wreck, covered with barnacles, and with black smoke from the engine ascending the main hatch. After gazing for a few moments, they commenced paddling with might and main towards the reef, through which the canoes soon disappeared.

I knew there must be a passage where they passed in, although at the moment I could not see it. So I steered the vessel towards the point where the canoes disappeared, and shortly perceived a narrow opening in the reef.

When the vessel got abreast of this I went below and stopped the engine, intending to reconnoitre as to the nature of the passage, and the possibility of taking the ship through.

A brief survey convinced me that this was possible.

The passage in the reef was about a hundred yards wide, and was clearly defined by reason of the white fringe of broken water which marked the line of coral.

Inside a glorious prospect presented itself to my delighted vision.

A semicircular bay, fringed with white sand, and dotted over with canoes, and people swimming in the water.

A little way from the shore, and under the shade of a

magnificent grove of trees—indeed, half concealed—I saw a village of huts. To the left and right of the native village, for a distance of half a mile on either side, I beheld what I supposed to be gardens or plantations carefully laid out.

At various points along the sandy beach canoes were lying, and I could see many people walking and standing near the shore.

I waited to see no more, but hastening below again, started the engine.

I then headed the ship right for the passage, and the wind being in my favour, she commenced running in at the rate of nearly two knots an hour.

At the entrance of the passage, between the extremities of the reef, I judged that the shore was more than half a mile distant, but could plainly hear the cries of the natives at beholding what must have seemed to them so terrible an object.

I can only compare the running to and fro, and general scene of disorder and wild confusion, to what is witnessed when an ants' nest is disturbed.

The shore was all alive with black and white speckled objects, rushing about and waving their arms, shouting and yelling in the extremity of their amazement and terror.

Slowly and majestically the big ship steamed in, and as she passed into the smooth water of the lagoon I left the wheel, ran to the side, and waving my hat above my head, cried aloud in my enthusiasm,—

“This shall be for a time my island home, and in memory of the old place at home I name this harbour the Haven of Rest!”

An appropriate name, I thought, if indeed I should be permitted to remain and rest in peace; for it was the first harbour I had entered—the first prospect I had had of repose after ceaseless toil for more than a year.

Once inside the reef, I steered the vessel straight for the shore until about half way, when I put the helm hard-a-port, and causing her to describe a circle, brought her head pointing to the passage in the reef.

This I did as a measure of precaution, as, if I had

seen a number of armed canoes putting out as if to attack me, I should have acted on the principle that discretion is the better part of valour, and have sought safety in flight. I did not suppose that the great ship, moved by so inadequate a force, could outstrip the light canoes of the savages, propelled by numerous paddles; but I considered I should be far safer out at sea than in the quiet water of the lagoon. For of course the rougher it was the worse it would be for their frail barques, while to the ship it would make no difference.

Having, then, got the vessel's head in the direction I wanted, I stopped the engine, and after forging ahead for a few fathoms she came to a standstill, and I was at liberty to survey the scene, without having either the helm or the engine to distract my attention.

After a time the excitement on shore subsided in a measure, and I perceived a large group of natives, all gathered together, and doubted not they were having a big talk about the ship.

All day long great crowds kept coming to the beach and gazing at the strange sight. None, however, were bold enough to launch canoes and approach nearer. At first I was rather glad of this, as it dispelled all fears of attack; but, after a time, I grew impatient, and wished that some of them would come alongside, so that I might hold communication with them.

All the day things remained in this state, and towards evening I judged it expedient to go out to sea again.

After long thought I had decided not to remain in the lagoon after dark, but rather to take the vessel to a safe distance from the island, and there leave her to.

I could not have slept in peace with the knowledge that a host of armed savages were within a quarter of a mile or so, and that I might be suddenly attacked at any moment.

When I awoke in the morning the vessel was about four miles from the land, the channel in the reef was still in sight, and I could just distinguish the native huts on shore.

I lit up the fire in the furnace of the engine, as I wished to have the vessel under control. When I had

no motive power I could not steer her, and then the ship was like a horse without a bridle.

I took it very quietly this morning, allowing the ship to drift about, while I passed the forenoon in attending to my garden on the deck. The plant that I supposed to be grain of some kind, had now come into ear, and I perceived that it was a sort of rye grass, therefore did not set much store by it.

The plant with the large green leaves had, by this time, blossomed, and bore a sort of pumpkin, which had increased marvellously in size the last few days. There were about a dozen of them, and I cut one, and cooked it for dinner, carefully saving the seeds. I found it delicious, quite equal, if not superior, to vegetable marrow.

After dinner I washed down the deck, and then, as there were a lot of flying-fish about, I amused myself by letting the falcon catch them.

Towards evening I set the paddles going, and steamed gently into the Haven of Rest, as I had christened the harbour.

After remaining for an hour or two, and making a rough outline chart of the coast and reef, I again took the ship out to sea.

My object in this was to familiarize the savages with the appearance of the ship, and dispel any fear they might have.

Beyond everything, I wished to avoid a conflict with them, knowing as I did what slaughter must ensue.

On the following day I bethought me of a plan by which I might let them know that I meant them no harm.

I sawed a cask in two, so as to make two tubs.

These I filled with articles I thought would prove acceptable—knives, nails, coloured cloth, and calico, from the cargo, and a variety of other things.

Having done so I steered the ship as near the shore as I thought safe, and lowered the two tubs over the side into the water, having taken care that the contents were so disposed that they would not upset.

Then I fetched a circuit and took the ship right out to sea.

I knew that they could not help seeing them floating in the water, and felt pretty sure that curiosity would prompt them to launch canoes and see what the strange objects were.

Nor was I wrong in my conjecture. From the fore-topsail-yard I kept a bright look-out on the lagoon and shore, and in the course of a couple of hours saw two canoes put out from the shore and cautiously approach the floating tubs. I could see plainly everything that passed by the aid of the telescope, and was amused at the proceedings.

First they commenced throwing objects, which I supposed to be stones, at the tubs. This was to see whether they were alive, or contained anything alive.

Evidently they were fearful of some stratagem, and, I do believe, thought that armed men were concealed in the tubs.

However, after an hour's cautious manœuvring, one of the canoes came within a yard or two, and a savage, standing up in the bows, proceeded to poke the tub with his spear. Apparently satisfied with this, both canoes then came up alongside, and then they proceeded to inspect the contents. I could tell by their gestures that they were both surprised and delighted.

Fastening the tubs astern of the canoes, they towed them ashore, and soon they were surrounded by an immense crowd of natives, and, I had no doubt, shouting loudly.

Each article as taken from the tub was handed from one to the other with a great display of amazement.

Their behaviour led me to think that I should soon be able to open communications with them without any great difficulty.

As the event turned out, however, I had much greater difficulty than I imagined would be the case, and but for what I may call an accident, it was not certain I should ever have succeeded at all.

After I had watched the doings on shore for some time, I took the vessel farther out to sea, and, it being a calm fine evening, hove her to, and went to sleep.

I shall write no more of this narrative until I have landed and held intercourse with the savages.

Perhaps I shall be slain in the attempt—who can tell?

I am weary of this waiting and watching, weary of recording failures and half measures; weary of life, even in this lovely climate; weary of all things, and filled with yearning—longing once more to behold white faces.

It is the evening of the 1st of September as I write this.

CHAPTER XXXIV

I AM NO LONGER ALONE.

SEPTEMBER 29TH, 1855.—A year and a month to-day since all my shipmates perished. A year and a month of solitude and dismal monotony, broken only by occasional partial successes.

Until this morning I had had nothing occur worth transferring from the leaves of the log to my journal.

For the last three weeks the weather has been fine, almost calm, with now and then a gentle sea breeze.

Every day I had taken the vessel into the lagoon and brought her out again at night. A constantly increasing host of natives has now congregated near the shore, opposite the passage of the reef. They have made a sort of encampment all around the village. I see them frequently assembled round some chief or person of distinction, who harangues, gesticulating violently, and pointing to the ship. Then there is a great rushing to and fro, seizing of spears, clubs, &c., and hurrying to the beach.

Canoes are launched, and I am in expectation of an attack. Every time as yet, however, it has not come off. I fancy that at the last moment their hearts failed them, and after approaching within a hundred yards or so of the ship, they would stop paddling, and after a great amount of shouting and defiance by means of gestures, would sheer off, and betake themselves to the land again.

On these occasions I was always prepared to receive them in a way they would not like.

After several false alarms of the kind, however, I began to be of opinion that they would never venture to attack me. I felt really weary at the prolonged suspense, and wished almost that they would come on.

I had actually debated with myself whether I would land, well armed, and marching boldly among them, offer them the hand of friendship, and if they were hostile, make a desperate fight for my life. I did not doubt that by means of the firearms I possessed I could kill a number of them, and perhaps strike such terror into the rest as to ensure my victory.

But after long and mature consideration I abandoned the idea as too dangerous, and resolved to wait, at all events, a little longer.

In the meanwhile I occupied myself in making a map of the island, taking soundings, and familiarizing myself in every possible way with its characteristics. I sailed, or rather steamed, right round. This cruise occupied about twenty hours, and as the vessel, aided by the wind, made nearly two knots an hour, I thus arrived approximately at the size of the island; I proved it to be about twenty-eight miles in circumference. Between this and the next island there was a very narrow strait, the distance between the reef not exceeding a hundred yards at the narrowest.

I perceived that constant communication was kept up between the smaller island and the one on which I had fixed. The characteristics of the former were much the same as the other, but its aspect as a whole was not so inviting. There was not the same evidence of careful cultivation; altogether it looked wilder, and less alluring to the eye.

All the seeds I had planted had now begun to germinate. I was pleased to see some blades of barley, and had but little doubt that they would come to maturity.

I had found a little Indian corn, which I at once planted.

In the day time I used to combine profit and pleasure by fishing, with a line I had made, with a piece of wire bent and sharpened for a hook. I caught dolphins, boneta, and another small fish of an unknown species.

My falcon did me good service by hunting and catching turtle-doves and wild pigeons, so that now I never tasted salt meat, and, having plenty of vegetables, what symptoms of scurvy still hung about me disappeared entirely.

In the woods, at some distance from the shore, I could make out some animals—hogs, and a species of small deer.

I had a great longing for some deer flesh, but dared not venture on shore, lest I should be cut off from the ship.

At one time I thought of landing on another part of the island, but I feared to leave the vessel, lest she should be blown off, and I should never be able to regain her.

This morning, however, an event of great importance occurred—an event which will certainly make a change in my future life.

I am no longer alone.

There are other human beings on board besides myself.

This is how it happened. Since yesterday I had noticed that some ceremony was going on and in preparation. I judged that it was of a funereal character by several things.

Near the shore, about a quarter of a mile west of the village, I had noticed an enclosure, and a careful examination convinced me that it was a burial ground.

For the last few days I had noticed a great number of people coming and going to a large hut on rising ground in the centre of the village. I judged this to be the abode of a chief, who was ill or wounded.

On the previous afternoon the hut was surrounded by a great concourse of people, some of whom sat, and others stood, in a semicircle.

For I could see them beating their breasts and striking themselves over the arms and head, when I cautiously approached with the ship to the shore, and could hear a continuous wailing sound of lamentation.

Looking attentively through the telescope, I saw that they held something in their hands with which they

were wounding themselves until I saw the blood flowed freely.

I remembered to have read of some such custom being prevalent among the islanders of the Pacific, on the death of a king, chief, or any great personage.

This, however, was only the commencement of the savage rites performed in honour of the dead man.

I have spoken of an enclosure near the beach which I conceived to be a burial ground. I came to this conclusion by reason of numerous mounds of earth, on each of which some objects, which I took to be spears, shields, and other weapons, were laid. At the head of each grave there was, also, a heap of stones, and the whole was surrounded by a low wall about two feet high.

Immediately outside this enclosure, and facing the sandy beach, a strange operation was going on under my eyes, for which, at first, I could not account.

A quantity of wood was collected—large logs and light brush and sticks. The logs were arranged in a square form, and at first I thought their intention was to erect a building—a temple, perhaps, or something of the kind. But gradually the truth dawned upon me.

It was a funeral pyre they were erecting, and I guessed that they were about to burn the body of the dead chief.

My prevailing sentiment was merely one of curiosity, and I allowed the vessel to come as near the shore as I thought safe, taking care to keep steam up and her head pointed seaward to the passage in the reef.

After some extraordinary proceedings, which I could by no means understand, a wild and grotesque dance took place around the hut of the dead chief. This was continued till one by one the dancers fell to the ground—I suppose from exhaustion. Then, with great solemnity, an object, like a small canoe, was brought out from the hut and laid across two long poles, at each end of which four men stood ready to lift and carry it.

I saw that it was indeed a small canoe, with both ends cut off. This contained the body of the chief, as I rightly conjectured.

At the blowing of a horn all the dancers who lay pros-

trate on the ground started to their feet and formed a sort of procession.

This done, the rude canoe coffin was raised up, and then from out of the hut issued two men, each leading a female with a rope of some kind fastened round her middle.

My curiosity was now greatly excited, and a vague feeling of apprehension possessed me, especially when I noticed that the two women were weeping and wailing, and seemed in a state of abject terror.

No wonder, poor creatures, for they were both about to be sacrificed in compliance with some barbaric custom.

I will here explain what I afterwards learned.

It seems that on the death of a chief it was considered necessary that he should have company to the land of spirits.

In the case of a great and powerful chief, two and even three victims were selected from among his female relatives, and cruelly slaughtered.

In all cases the wife, if he were married, was one of the victims.

In the present instance it was his wife and sister who were to be sacrificed.

The women were naked to the waist, around which they had a girdle or tunic of leaves.

With the exception of this, they had no other article of clothing or ornament.

A great number of natives, very scantily attired, went on first, dancing, brandishing their spears, and singing or chanting.

Then came the body, borne by eight men, and immediately following that the unhappy victims. The rear was brought up by old men, women, and children.

With feelings of horror, which increased in intensity each moment, I watched the whole proceedings. The body was placed in front of the pile of wood, and covered over completely with leaves. Then the women were dragged on to the pile of wood, and made to stand back to back by a post which had been erected in the centre.

Then I saw an old man advance and ascend on the

wood pile, while another with a burning brand also came forward.

The first old man, whom I took to be a priest, had a large knife-like weapon in his hand, and brandishing it about his head, seemed to be delivering some address before plunging it in the hearts of his victims. I could bear the horrid scene no longer!

A happy thought struck me; I could not suffer this vile murder to be perpetrated before my eyes.

With all possible haste, I dragged one of the small cannon right aft, and pointed the muzzle over the taff-rail. I had already practised a good deal, and now took good aim at the pile of wood on which the blood of the poor women was to be shed. When I thought I had got a good sight, I fired—

Bang!

I heard the rush of the ball with which it was loaded, and saw the wood of the pile fly about in all directions, some of the pieces knocking over a dozen or so of the savages—causing the others to scatter in all directions.

At this time the vessel was not above four hundred yards from the shore, having slowly drifted in under the influence of a light breeze from the sea. I could see, and hear too, now, tolerably well.

A chorus of yells and shrieks swelled on the air, and the frightened savages rushed hither and thither in frantic terror.

The women, however, seemed to know intuitively that this was a friendly interposition; and though, of course, poor ignorant creatures, they could not have known by what means I accomplished it, they felt that their unexpected reprieve from knife and flames—from a terrible death—was due to the great object floating on the waters of the lagoon.

I was obliged to leave the helm now and start the engine, for the ship had drifted dangerously near the shore.

When I had done so I came on deck, just in time to see the two women run swiftly down to the sea shore and plunge in.

At first the savages seemed utterly astounded and astonished, and knew not what to do.

But, when they beheld their intended victims swimming with might and main towards the ship, they rushed yelling down to the beach, and wading in up to their middles, commenced hurling spears at the fugitives, and shouting to them to return.

I watched the chase with intense interest, and fervently hoped that the poor creatures would get safely alongside.

While some of the natives were hurling their spears—nearly all of which fortunately fell short—others ran along the shore, to where some canoes were drawn up.

The women swam like fish, and before a canoe could be launched, were half way to the ship. In order to give them every facility in my power, I stopped the engine, as the vessel had now receded a considerable distance from the shore.

It was true that the women swam fast; but the light canoes would skim the water much faster, as I well knew.

In their rage at the escape of their victims, they seemed to have forgotten their terror of the big ship, or, perhaps they had become familiarized with the sight of the vessel, and were not aware that I was the cause of the escape of the two women.

I know not what they did think, so will confine myself to relating what they did. In a very short time half a dozen canoes were launched and manned, and in hot pursuit. So swiftly did they dart over the smooth water, that I began to be of opinion that they would overtake the swimmers before they could succeed in reaching the ship.

I determined to stand by them, and prevent their recapture by force of arms. So I took a rifle loaded with ball, and aimed it at the water, a little ahead of the foremost canoe.

They stopped paddling for a moment or two at the sound of the report. So also did the women, apparently uncertain whether this was not a threat to them to keep off. So I stood up on the rail, and waved my hand for them to come on.

They commenced swimming again towards the ship;

but the time they had lost had been taken advantage of by the pursuers, and the foremost canoe was within about a hundred and fifty yards, while the fugitives had yet nearly a hundred to swim.

A tall savage, hideously tattooed, and with a great feather on his head, worn as a plume, stood up in the bow of the canoe, and, with great skill and force, flung a spear. It plunged into the water close to her head.

The fellow was about to hurl another spear when I seized a rifle, and, dropping on one knee, took aim, and fired.

It was a good shot, and hit him full in the chest. He staggered, dropped his spear, and fell out of the canoe.

Probably those in the other canoe thought that he had lost his balance, and were not aware he was wounded, as they saw no missile. To undeceive some of them, I took one of the guns loaded with large shot, and fired it at them.

A simultaneous yell from several throats told me that more than one had been peppered.

CHAPTER XXXV

A CONFLICT WITH THE NATIVES: I CAPTURE A PRISONER.

This checked their advance, and I ceased to fire any more, quite content if they would but keep their distance. Meanwhile the women swam on, and the wounded chief was dragged into a canoe. I saw by their actions, as they proceeded to examine him, that the bullet had gone clean through his chest and out at the back—so in all probability he was mortally wounded.

This was the first blood I had shed, but on consideration I felt no remorse; for what I had done was with the object of saving two helpless women from a cruel death.

If ever homicide was justified this was.

So soon as the two women were alongside I threw over a rope, and after some little hesitation they clambered nimbly up.

The instant they reached the deck they ran forward to the bows and hid themselves under the fore-castle.

The tunic, composed of leaves and fibres, which was their only garment, had been almost destroyed and washed away by the water, so I went below and brought up a quantity of white calico, with which I went forward. Speaking to them in a mild persuasive voice, and making signs that I meant them no harm, I also threw in the calico to them, and in a short time they both came out, with the white fabric draped around their wet forms in a manner by no means ungraceful.

Both were well proportioned women, with decidedly good features. One was a mere girl; the other might have been, perhaps, twenty-five years old.

They looked strange objects as they stood on the deck, gazing with awe and wonder at that strange scene.

Their long luxurious black hair, all dripping wet, hung down below their waists, and contrasted strangely with the snow-white calico. While I was looking wonderingly at them, one of them suddenly gave utterance to a shrill scream. Turning my head sharply, I saw a tall savage just clambering over the bulwarks. He was cutting away at the boarding netting with a sort of small hatchet or tomahawk, and had already destroyed enough of my defence to admit his body.

I was forward and all the arms were aft, while he was in the main rigging. Consequently it would be necessary for me to pass him before I could get a gun or rifle.

However, I did not hesitate but a minute, and, snatching up a cutlass, which very fortunately I had that morning been using as a hoe for my garden, I rushed to the defence of my ship.

My attack was so sudden as quite to disconcert my savage foe. He hurled a spear at me as I rushed up to him, sword in hand, but, fortunately, this missed, though it whizzed close to my ear, and stuck quivering in the bulwarks on the other side.

Before he could do any more I was upon him, and delivered a cut at his head, which caused him to stagger backwards.

In an instant afterwards he leaped on the rail, at the place where he had forced an entry, and sprang into the

sea, the blood pouring over his face from a bad cut on the head.

Scarcely had I disposed of him when I beheld two others, who had climbed over near the mizen rigging.

It was fortunate for me that they did not know the use of firearms, for they stood amidst a perfect arsenal, and could, had they known how, have killed me easily.

I rushed into the cabin, where I knew there was a loaded revolver, which that morning I had been cleaning up. It lay on my berth, and, possessing myself of it, I ran up on deck, determined to conquer or die.

Scarcely had I set foot on the poop when whizz came two spears: the first one missed—the second one pierced my left arm.

A cry of rage and pain escaped me, and levelling the revolver, I fired four shots in rapid succession—two at each of the invaders. Each shot told, and with yells of pain, both the savages leaped overboard.

I then seized a gun loaded with shot, and fired it into the canoe alongside, from which they had reached the deck.

Four or five were wounded, and seizing their paddles, they rowed away, shrieking with pain.

The fellow whom I had wounded on the head with the cutlass, after swimming for a short time, sank, and was drowned.

I felt sorry to see a fellow creature perish thus, but could render him no assistance. Nor is it at all sure that it would have been safe to attempt it.

Looking out, I saw that all the canoes had now taken to flight, and were making for the shore as fast as paddles could propel them.

Of the two whom I had shot with the revolver pistol, one had sunk and was drowned, while the other clung to the rope which I had thrown over for the women, and so kept himself afloat.

I debated with myself for some time as to what I should do, but finally humanity prevailed, and, though wounded and in pain myself, I resolved to give him some assistance, trusting to my own vigilance to guard against any treachery on his part.

First, however, I drew the spear out of my arm, and proceeded to bind it up.

It was merely a flesh wound, and not likely to prove dangerous, unless—terrible thought!—it should prove to be poisoned.

I knew that some savage nations were in the habit of poisoning their arrow and spear-heads, and, for aught I could tell to the contrary, this might have been so poisoned.

All the time that the fight had been going on, the two women who had taken refuge on board had been wringing their hands and weeping and wailing loudly.

In order to reassure them, and also to convince them I was by no means alarmed of their countrymen, I went forward to them with a piece of linen, and pointing at my wounded arm, motioned to them to bind it up. This they eagerly proceeded to do.

One of them made signs, which I could not at first understand, but ultimately interpreted to mean that she wanted water.

This was the fact, and having shown her where the fresh water was in the cabin, she took a tin pot, and commenced wetting the rags and binding them round my arm.

This done, I proceeded to lower a ladder over the side, and motioned the poor wretch in the water to come.

After some hesitation, he did so, slowly and painfully, and stood trembling on the deck before me, his vanquisher.

The situation was a proud one, and I felt that I could afford to be magnanimous.

He was bleeding from the bullet wounds, one in the shoulder, the other in the neck.

Motioning him to seat himself, I proceeded to make an examination.

All the while he watched with haggard frightened eyes, fearing, I suppose, that I was going to kill him.

I plugged up the worst wound with lint, to stop the loss of blood, and then handed him over to the care of the women, who, understanding my wishes, proceeded

to bind up his wounds with wet bandages, as they had mine.

I now started the engine, and steered the ship out through the passage into the open sea.

All this did not take above ten minutes in the enacting, from the moment when I fired the first rifle-shot to that of my final victory and triumph.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

I LEARN THE LANGUAGE OF THE NATIVES.

ON reviewing this adventure, I could not but feel astonished and impressed at the courage and audacity of the savages. It was a very grave matter, for as they had shown so much boldness on one occasion, they might do so again; and this affair might prove to be only a skirmish prior to a great battle yet to take place. On looking ashore, I did not feel particularly reassured. I saw that there was a great council assembled, and that arms were being collected, and various signs of activity, which led me to suppose that—notwithstanding the loss of two of their number and the captivity of another, besides the chief first shot, who, I felt pretty certain, was mortally wounded—they might yet renew the strife, and prove very troublesome. On the whole, though, I felt greatly pleased at the thought of having some society, were it only that of two savage girls and a wounded enemy. As for the former, I felt satisfied that gratitude for having saved their lives would bind them to my service, and I resolved at once to set about explaining to them my wishes.

In order to communicate with them to any good purpose, it would be necessary, I felt sure, either for them to learn my language or for me to learn theirs.

Now I not unnaturally rated my intelligence and ability higher than those of these wild damsels, and resolved that I would at once set to work and learn their language.

As to the wounded prisoner, I resolved to be on the

safe side, and, taking a pair of iron cuffs and a light chain, I handcuffed his hands together and fastened him to the mainmast. He submitted quietly, but not without signs of fear—thinking, perhaps, that I was going to kill him at my leisure. In order to allay his fears, and let him know that I intended to treat him kindly, I got him water and food. The day before I had roasted two wild pigeons which the falcon had caught, and one of these was still untouched. A part of this I offered him, with some biscuit, bidding him eat. But he shook his head, and pointed to his wounded neck and shoulder, thereby meaning to convey to me the information that he was in too great pain.

However, the two damsels did not refuse, but at once squatted on the deck, and commenced pulling the pigeon to pieces with their fingers. The biscuit they looked puzzled at, but understanding that I wished them to eat it, they proceeded to break it up small, and soaked it in the tin vessel of water.

Thinking they might have a sweet tooth, I got a little molasses and poured it in with the soaked bread. Their wonder and delight amused me greatly, as did their manner of eating, for they stirred it up with their fingers, and fed themselves with the same primitive utensils.

Having got the vessel about three miles out to sea, I let the fire in the furnace go out, and made all comfortable for the night.

It struck me that as these savages had displayed unexpected boldness and courage, they might have more sense than I gave them credit for, and that possibly they might be acquainted with the use of firearms, although they did not possess any.

At all events I thought that this prisoner of mine might have seen how I fired at him, and proceed to imitate me.

To put this beyond the bounds of possibility, I proceeded to fire off all the guns, rifles, &c., with the exception of a pair of revolver pistols I carried in my belt.

Tremendous was the din as I discharged fire after fire, till all were empty. It lasted half-an-hour, and, I

imagine, astonished my prisoner and new companions considerably.

When night came on I provided a resting-place for the women, and took the wounded savage an old sail and some blankets on which to repose.

In order to test the docility and intelligence of the women, I made signs to them to keep awake, and call me up in about four hours' time.

This I did by pointing to the moon, then to the place where I guessed she would be at that time; and then I closed my eyes, and made motions to them to shake me and so rouse me.

Great was their delight when they understood me, and they at once signified their willingness to obey, which they punctually did.

When I had slept four hours, and they called me, I got up and signed to them to go down and sleep.

Thus, instead of sleeping and leaving the vessel to take her chance, we kept watch and watch.

I contrived to make them understand that if the wounded prisoner attempted to escape they were to wake me: also if any canoes approached from the island. This was not at all likely, but still there was a possibility thereof.

Next day I set to work learning the language. I got hold of the substantives easily enough, but with verbs and adjectives it was a more difficult matter.

I do not mean to write any more in my diary for some time, until I can communicate easily with these people, and decide on a plan of action.

* * * * *

25TH OCTOBER, 1855.—A month has elapsed since the day of the battle in the harbour.

I have been occupying myself almost solely in learning the language of the inhabitants of the island, and have succeeded tolerably well. I can make them understand what I want now with scarcely any need for pantomime.

The wound of the prisoner has progressed favourably, as has mine. He still remains surly and suspicious, though he does not refuse to obey me.

I have been several times into the Haven of Rest, but did not remain, as I saw symptoms of a fresh attack being made on the ship.

I wish to learn enough of the language to dispatch the prisoner ashore with a message, and think I shall soon be able to do so.

The two young women are much more intelligent; but of course it would be madness for them to trust themselves within reach of the cruel savages, who would have murdered them in cold blood.

One of them does the cooking, and the other I have taught to put coals upon the furnace fire of the engine. At first they were terribly frightened at this, thinking it was a living monster, I believe. Now, however, they have got rid of all such foolish fears, and I find them pleasant companions. By their aid I hope, by the blessing of Providence, to rig the vessel properly, and in due time sail away from this lovely but savage spot.

I have taught them both to steer, and one of them, the younger, can tell the time by the watch.

We have struck up a sort of hybrid language—half English, half their own tongue.

I have found considerable advantage in this plan, in more than one respect.

For instance, I wished to know the island word for the verb "to run." So I said "run," and then proceeded to do so along the deck. Then I said "English, run, what you call in Tongadoo?" the name of the island.

They at once understood me, and replied, giving me the native word.

Things progressed favourably enough, and I could not but be content and even thankful for the change from utter isolation to some sort of human companionship, albeit only that of two savage girls and a sulky island warrior.

I had hunted up from the cases of cargo in the hold some female attire, more in accordance with my ideas of decorum than the extremely scanty costume which they possessed.

I had, moreover, given them Christian names. The elder I called Ruth, the younger Rachel.

This choice was purely a matter of chance. I turned to an old dictionary, at the end of which was a list of male and female Christian names, and resolved to give them the first names that my eye fell on, and those happened to be the ones above mentioned.

We got on excellently together, the women seeming to fall in gradually to their new mode of life.

Of course any conversation worthy of the name was exceedingly difficult and tedious, but at the end of a month, by means of words half English, half Tongadoo, and plentifully aided by signs, we could talk tolerably well.

I was able to elicit from them the meaning of the extraordinary scene when I fired at the funeral pile and so astonished the natives.

It was nearly as I suspected—one, the elder, was the wife of the dead chief whose funeral obsequies I had witnessed; the other his sister.

Both, according to the horrid custom prevailing in that savage island, were to be sacrificed in order to accompany him to the land of spirits.

I had some considerable difficulty in eliciting the fact that one was wife, the other sister, to the chief on whose funeral pyre they were to have been murdered.

An amusing incident happened in connection with this, which I will proceed to relate in another chapter, as I must stop writing now to go on deck.

CHAPTER XXXVII.

A PROPOSAL OF MARRIAGE.

ONE can well imagine that to people in ignorance of each other's language, and with no dictionary but that afforded by dumb signs to help them, it would not be easy to get at the words expressing relationships of all descriptions. This is how I got at it.

After pointing to the shore, and making her under-

stand by signs "dead man," I pointed to herself, and then, putting my arm round her waist in an affectionate manner, as might a husband with his wife, looked interrogatively, as if to ask, "Were you his wife?" After a bit she understood me, and, clapping her hands, nodding her head and laughing the while, cried, "Yes, yes!"

Then I taught her the words "wife" and "husband," and made her understand the distinction.

Now I knew that among most savage races polygamy is in vogue, and thought it likely that the other, too, was a wife.

I forgot that I might have asked her in her own language, the other woman having given me the word, and proceeded to go through the same pantomimic action.

To my surprise she clasped me tightly round the neck, and, her eyes beaming with pleasure, laughed and nodded her head, crying, "Yesa, yesa! me you! me you!"

Gradually I comprehended that the island damsel had taken my pantomimic performance as a confession of love and proposal of marriage. The situation was a little embarrassing and very amusing, and for the life of me I could not help laughing. This the savage damsel took to mean assent to her proposal, whereupon her delight was unbounded. Nor was she contented with once, or twice even. Half-a-dozen times during the day she would run up to me, and, pointing to herself, would say, laughing the while,—

"Yesa, yesa! You me—you me!"

For the life of me I did not know how to undeceive her. In vain I tried to look grave—a smile would break out in my face—and it was only by degrees that I was able to make her understand that I had no intention of taking to myself a wild wife from the island.

I must own, however, that Rachel, or Taramata—as she told me was her right name—was a very pretty and graceful girl, with good features, and active and elegant as a young fawn in her movements.

I had cleaned them up as respectably as I could, and wished to make them even more civilized in appear-

ance; but do what I would, I could not prevail on them to wear a single thing beyond a cotton dress. As for stockings, or any underclothing—though among the cargo there were heaps of such things—they utterly scorned them.

Then, too, they had a wonderful fondness for the water, and, somewhat to my embarrassment, would frequently throw off their loose dresses, wrap a piece of calico round them, and leap into the sea, where they would disport for an hour or more, like a pair of mermaids.

The greatest difficulty I had was with their food; I wished them to sit decorously round the table, with plates before them, and eat with spoons, knives, and forks.

They used to obey to please me, but so sure as I went on deck or turned my back for a moment, I would find them squatted on the floor, eating away with their fingers.

I can assure the reader of this narrative that my dinner party each day was of an extraordinary nature.

I sat at the head of the table with all the dignity of host. On either side of me sat the two women, looking, in their light dresses, with their long black hair floating in wild disorder over their shoulders, singular creatures indeed. Opposite sat the prisoner—the wounded warrior—whose proud spirit I had in vain tried to tame.

Sulky and reserved, as nearly naked as possible, and with a look of pride on his tattooed features positively ludicrous, whenever I glanced at him I could not help laughing. The mixture of dignity, nudity, and awkwardness he presented was enough to set the beadle laughing in church time.

He would eat nothing but rice and fish, and not a bit with us. I insisted on his joining my dinner party every day, and helped him regularly with the rest. He would leave it on his plate till we had done and risen from the table, and then would take it forward, squat on the deck, and devour it after his own fashion.

I did not keep him a prisoner now, but allowed him to roam about the deck at his pleasure, when out at sea.

Even in the harbour I merely kept a sharp eye on him, telling the girls to do so also.

I had given him a practical caution of the danger of attempting to escape, and felt certain that the lesson had sunk into his mind. This I effected by throwing overboard an empty barrel, and then firing at it with rifles, at a distance of a hundred yards or so. I seldom missed, and the consequence was that when I hauled it up on deck again it was perforated by many bullets. I let him understand that should he jump overboard and attempt to swim ashore, I should serve his dusky body in the same manner.

Our life was a very quiet one, tolerably pleasant; and but for the constant yearning for home which would rise in my breast, I might even have been happy. Plenty of good food; fish to be had in abundance, lots of flour on board, salt meat, and other stores, enough to last for a year or two.

Then, as to vegetables and so forth, my garden on deck was an enormous success. The pumpkin plant bore fruit twice the size of my head, and there had besides appeared a sort of melon, very sweet and precious.

The barley and paddy had sprouted up, and the straws were now nearly a foot high. The Indian corn too had shot up to a height of near three feet, and in another month, what with the warm climate and care on my part to keep watering and so forth, I might expect a crop in a short time. As for the foremast, that looked like a tree smothered up and enclosed in verdure. A creeping plant had so spread around it, mounting up to the foretop, as to present the prettiest sight imaginable; the creeper bearing a flower not unlike a small blue convolvulus. Lately I had been increasing the mould, by mixing dried leaves chopped up, the scrapings of the falcon's cabin, and any vegetable matter which in the process of decay would form *humus*—the principal material of all such soils.

I think I have mentioned in a former part of this narrative that in some of the birds I had shot, or that the falcon caught, I had found pieces of vegetable sub-

stance, something like bits of potato. It struck me that these might be turned to account, so I planted them carefully. I thought these might be parts of a plant like a potato, and if one of the eyes or germinating points were there, imagined it would sprout and take root.

And, behold! the result was two or three roots, in shape like a mangold-wurzel, in substance like a potato—neither more nor less than yams.

This was a grand discovery, and I thought a great deal of it, until, showing one to the girl Rachel, she opened her eyes, clapped her hands, and declared with great glee that there were “plenty on shore.”

As to all the other plants and vegetables, they declared that they had never seen any of the like before. So I congratulated myself that when at last I did gain a footing on shore, I should be able to introduce fresh and valuable productions.

When at last I gain a footing on the shore!

Will that ever be?

Here have I been tossing about, cruising to and fro in the quiet seas around the island—now sailing in for a few hours, only to issue out again—for a space going on for two months.

But in all this I am acting strictly up to a pre-arranged plan. I wish to familiarize myself with the language, so that I may be able to hold parley with the savages.

In this I have succeeded tolerably well, and, moreover, have got the vessel into better trim.

Now that I am not constantly tied to the helm, compelled every few minutes to see to the furnace fire, and with only myself to steer and handle the big ship, but can move about the decks without hurry, observe where repairs and alterations are wanted, and, in fact, do many things before impossible, I have spliced broken ropes, mended torn sails, cleared away obstructions, thoroughly cleaned the decks and bulwarks, and altogether contrived to make the ship look less of a battered old hulk than she did.

Then, after, the hose of my still required mending.

Some of the kid forming the covering was torn, and the salt water permeated so as to cause the fresh to taste. I set the two women to work, showing them first how to use the needle and thread.

It was marvellous how quickly they picked up the knack—wonderful to watch their nimble fingers as they plied the needle!

As for my captive warrior, I made him work about the deck, hauling in ropes, pumping water to wash decks, and any other laborious work. He obeyed me invariably, but always in a sulky moody manner, and in utter silence.

The girls would sometimes address him, but seldom got any reply. Usually he favoured them with a scowl and savage glance.

I fear I shall have trouble with him yet.

It is wonderful how quiet and equable the winds are during the night. The vessel hove to usually drifts a few miles out to sea, with a light breeze, but never any considerable distance. Morning after morning, on going on deck, I have discerned the island in exactly the same position.

On entering the bay I had observed frequently that the number of canoes on the beach had increased, and that there were unmistakable signs of great warlike preparations. Several large tents had been erected; and there were even more small ones than heretofore. Parties were continually seen arriving from the interior, and as they seemed to be welcomed with great rejoicing, I guessed they were chiefs from another island, or, at all events, a distant part of this one. The latter hypothesis, however, could not account for all the new canoes, as in my cruise round I had discovered nothing like a large village heretofore, and had long ago come to the conclusion that this was the principal place.

Ruth and Rachel confirmed me in this opinion of the case, and I felt tolerably well satisfied on the point.

Piles of arms, too—spears, clubs, shields, bows and arrows, &c.—could be seen in different places; and I could discern through the spy glass people busily at work in fabricating the same.

So, all things considered, the conviction was pressed on me that these people meditated another hostile attack on the ship, and were making preparations for it.

As I became better acquainted with the language, and could converse more freely with Ruth and Rachel, I learned more of the habits and customs of the islanders, and I gathered that these people were blindly obedient to their priests, who declared that failing the usual sacrifice at the death of a chief of some female relation—one, at least—the most terrible vengeance would be taken on the whole community by the incensed spirit, thus deprived of his company to the other world.

Such a case as wife or sister escaping, as they had, had never before happened. From time immemorial it had been tacitly acquiesced in, and the girls declared that but for my shot they would never have attempted to escape.

They thought it was a spirit which had come to save them, they said.

I questioned them as to the feeling and opinion on the island about the vessel, as they must have heard it spoken of before they were condemned to death. They said that, at first, the people looked on it with the utmost terror; then, as the great ship appeared day after day without any disaster occurring, fear gave place to wonder only.

Some thought it was a huge and harmless monster of the sea, and pointed to the paddles, which they could see moving. These, they said, were the fins of the creature. Others again maintained that it was an enormous canoe from a far-off land. They were greatly puzzled as to there being only one man on board, and he in such strange garb, and with a white untattooed face. The priests declared that it was a spirit, but could not decide whether it was a good or evil one.

When, however, the tubs containing cloth, &c., fell into their hands, their delight was unbounded.

One old priest, however, who had great influence, warned them that these strange objects were but snares—baits, thrown by a malignant spirit for their destruction.

This had great effect, and some threw the articles

they had appropriated into the sea. However, the old priest declared that he had seen the spirit of a dead warrior, who had told him the big canoe belonged to an evil spirit—a white-faced devil—and that the canoe must be taken, and the spirit driven away; that it was a cowardly spirit, and that he was destined to defeat it utterly and destroy the big canoe. His reasons, they said, caused quite an excitement, and some hot-headed young chiefs were for launching the war canoes, and attacking at once. But the older and steadier ones restrained their ardour, and counselled that they should wait until great warlike preparations were made. For, said they, though only one be visible, there may be hundreds in the big canoe, and they may be powerful, and fight us with strange weapons. There was a tradition current amongst them, I learned, to the effect that, years and years ago, a great canoe appeared and made thunder and lightning, and burned their huts.

Pondering on this, I felt half inclined to believe that the island must have been visited by white men before. But this was only conjecture, and I will get back to facts. It seemed certain that, instigated by this old priest, they meant to attack, and attempt to destroy the ship.

And now, despite the slaughter of their comrades, the capture of one, and my successful rescue of the intended victims, it seemed pretty certain that they still meditated my destruction.

The girls told me that the old priest had enormous influence, and that at his bidding men had willingly suffered themselves to be killed—he saying, cruel old impostor, that he had seen a spirit who had ordered it.

So that, on the whole, I made up my mind to expect an attack, and was prepared for it accordingly.

However, I made up my mind that I would avert it if possible, and now studied my hardest to master the language, so as to be able to parley with them.

I had not yet forgotten my dream or vision, in which Polly had appeared to me and told me I should come to a beautiful island, where I should live for some time. I was superstitious enough to give great weight to this

dream, and determined that, come what might, I would gain a footing on this lovely isle of Tongadoo.

Besides, as a matter of interest, I reasoned, it was the best thing for me. If I could only conciliate these savages, I might rig the ship afresh (there was plenty of timber and to spare ashore), provision afresh, mend the great tank, and fill it with fresh water, so as to obviate the necessity of distillations. The great point of all, however, was to get a crew to navigate the vessel safe to her destined port.

I had never forgotten that. All these months I had kept in my heart a pious resolution to take the ship safe into port, with all her valuable cargo.

By sticking to her to the last, and safely bringing her in, I should indeed prove myself a true British sailor, and worthy nephew of brave old Captain Copp.

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

I BECOME A MAGICIAN.

I HAD an earnest longing to visit this lovely shore, which I had now had for nearly two months in constant view.

I cast about me for a plan by which I might do so, without being discovered and attacked; and at last hit upon what I thought would be successful.

In the first place a calm night would be necessary. For that, in all probability, I should not have to wait long.

A moonlight night would also be necessary, in order that I might be able to see my way about when I did land, and not blunder into an enemy's encampment.

This, too, I should not have long to wait for, considering the lovely weather which usually prevailed.

Next I must find a passage in the reef surrounding the islands. Not a large passage for the ship, but a small one through which the boat could enter.

Having got all these necessary conditions, my plan was as follows:—

To bind my prisoner safely, and then, lowering the boat, row quietly through a passage in the reef on the other side of the island, land in some sheltered spot, leave the boat, and go on an excursion into the interior.

I had in view the capture of one of the small deer I had observed in the woods. In fact I had set my heart on a venison dinner—pretty presumptuous for one in my situation, certainly! But rest, good living, and a fair prospect of final escape, had caused a great rise in my spirits.

I intended to leave the vessel adrift, as, it being a calm night, she could not go very far. There was a risk, it is true, but a very small one, I finally persuaded myself.

So I lay by, waiting for a favourable opportunity, and made all preparations.

I cleared one of the boats, and ascertained that she was all right by lowering and hoisting her up again; put the oars in her, also the guns and ammunition.

However, the wished-for calm moonlight night did not come all at once; and I grew impatient.

To pass the time away, I one day went down the hold, and commenced breaking open some cases of cargo which I had hitherto neglected.

Now, in ordinary cases, this would be at sea a high crime, but as I was situated, I was, of course, quite justified in doing so.

I have before spoken of certain cases containing chemical and galvanic apparatus. The thought struck me that these might be made useful to influence the savages. In the course of my explorations I came all at once on a box containing a large magic lantern, with a number of slides.

Swift as light the thought darted through my mind—What a thing to frighten the savages with!

The more I considered on the subject, the more certain I felt that I had accidentally come across a splendid means of acting on their supernatural fears.

I resolved to try it that very night, and accordingly proceeded to carry the magic lantern, boxes of slides, and all necessaries up into the cabin.

I have called it a magic lantern ; that is not strictly correct ; I should have said a phantasmagoria, as it does not produce the figures in the centre of a circle of light, but they appear alone on any object on which the light is thrown. This makes the effect much more wonderful and mysterious; and to the untutored eyes of a savage, nothing but the supernatural could account for it.

It took me some time to make the thing work, as I was not well up in the manipulation.

To Rachel, who asked me in her pretty broken language—half English, half Tongadoo—what all that was? I replied, in the same style, that it was my spirit box. On asking me what I meant, I gave her to understand that I was a great magician, and could “call up spirits from the vasty deep.” This gave me a great deal of trouble to explain, but at last I contrived to do so, and thereupon she expressed great curiosity to see one of these spirits.

I determined to satisfy her, and made my preparations accordingly. While doing this I took it into my cabin—one time that of the captain—and having lit the lamp and adjusted the focus, I proceeded to examine the slides.

The first lot I came to were landscapes and scenery, so these I at once dismissed. Presently, however, I came to a box of slides, all figures, and at last hit upon a quantity of grotesque ones, which, however, to children and savages would not appear grotesque, but horrible.

There was his Satanic majesty himself, in all the glory of horns, hoofs, and tail. Then there were goblins and imps, creatures with gigantic heads, goggle eyes, hideous mouths, and small bodies. Then I came to some slides representing Ojibbeway Indians, tattooed in their war paint, and looking very fierce and terrible indeed. One fellow particularly took my fancy, a savage looking chief, with brandished tomahawk, executing a terrific war dance. He was leaping high in air, and one could almost imagine the sound of the war-whoop issuing from the open mouth.

He was nearly naked, tattooed in a most frightful

manner, and altogether presented an appearance well calculated to frighten a timid child or ignorant savage.

"That's the man for my money!" I exclaimed: "I'll touch him up a little bit, and tell our sulky warrior forward that it's his father's ghost!"

My cabin was on the starboard side. When the sliding-door was opened I could see from inside the wainscoting or bulk-heads of the opposite cabins; these were painted of a white colour, and would do very well to throw the image of the phantasmagoria upon

When it was dark I sent the girls on deck, and proceeded to experiment and focus the lens.

I lit and trimmed the lamp, arranged all the glasses, and then proceeded to try some slides.

The first I took were landscapes, and were really beautiful. Presently, I came to one—a gorgeous representation of a tropical island; this I placed on one side, as also several others which took my fancy.

Next I came to the figures and groups; and, by-and-by, the lantern showed on the opposite bulk-head a beautiful girl, with a circlet of feathers on her head, a leopard skin over one shoulder, but half covering an exquisite bust. She wore a tunic of leaves and peacocks' feathers. Her feet and legs were bare, but round her ankles were silver rings, as also on her arms. Underneath was the title, "An Indian Princess."

This picture, I thought, by a little straining, might be made to represent a princess of one of these islands, and I resolved to tell the girls that it was the spirit of one as she appeared in spirit-land.

After having gone through nearly all the slides, and selected a number, I called down the girls, and told them, with great solemnity, that I was going to call up and speak to some of my familiar spirits.

They appeared awe-struck, but curious; and answered—after some whispered conversation between each other—that they would like to see the spirits, if I was sure they would not hurt them.

Of course they did not talk in the easy connected way I write it, but made themselves understood as best they could—partly by words, partly by signs.

To give all this in detail, however, in my narrative, would greatly disfigure the story and make it wearisome; and though what I am now relating may never be read by human being, I wish to make the story as concise and interesting as possible.

I placed them with their backs to the cabin, where was the magic lantern, and told them to look steadfastly at the opposite side, where I intended to throw the figure. There was just sufficient light in the saloon to enable me to see about, but not enough to destroy the effect. Having chosen a suitable slide—a representation of a fairy in white robes, with wings, wand, and a star on her forehead—I placed it in its proper place; and, after telling them to look steadfastly opposite, began reciting a verse of poetry, which no doubt they thought an incantation.

I had told them that I would raise up the good spirits which protected me; and, all at once, ceased speaking, and removed the cap from the lens of the lantern. A scream of surprise—not unmixed with terror—greeted the sudden appearance of the fairy, life-size, on the opposite bulk-head.

I listened for some little time to their expressions of reverend wonder and delight at the beautiful apparition, which I caused to glide slowly to and fro by moving the slide.

Then I came out into the saloon and explained that this was a kind and amiable spirit, very gentle and good, and did not like war; that she gave me good counsel, but did not aid me in battle; when I required that, I called on another spirit, a terrible one, who held the thunder and lightning in his hand, and hurled bolts of fire at my foes.

Suddenly putting the cap over the lens, the fairy vanished, and I went on to say that I would now call up and let them see my war spirit. I spoke with great solemnity, and warned them not to be frightened, for that this fierce phantom would not harm them unless told to do so by me.

After putting in the proper slide, and calling their attention, I again went through my supposed incanta-

tion—a stanza from Sir Walter Scott's "Marmion"—and suddenly removing the cap, there appeared on the opposite partition an image of Jupiter, seated on a throne of clouds, with lightning darting from his uplifted right hand. The aspect of the god was terrible and forbidding. Might and majesty were indicated by the stern and massive brow and piercing eye; and this time the girls screamed aloud in genuine terror, and ran out of the cabin. I—scarcely able to keep from laughing—followed them, and told them not to be afraid. With a little persuasion I got them back into the cabin, and made them look at it until by degrees their terror vanished, and they regarded it simply with reverential awe.

After this I exhibited to their wondering gaze a representation of an angel with outspread wings, soaring through space; and, lastly, showed them the Indian princess, who I made them understand was an ancestor of their own. Then I thought that enough had been done, and closed the exhibition, satisfied that I had produced a deep and lasting effect on their minds.

I was desirous that the sulky warrior should also hear of it; so when I had finished, I sent the girls to the fore part of the deck, where he was, on some excuse or other.

Presently I saw them all talking together, and knew that he was being told of my magical power to raise spirits.

The savage, however, it appeared, was incredulous. This I learned by his interruptions, gestures, and from what the girls told me.

"Tell him," I said, "that, if his heart is big enough, he shall see for himself."

This message being carried to him, he still expressed his disbelief in my powers, and I resolved to give him a good fright. I ordered him into the cabin, and bade him stand opposite the place where I wished the phantom to appear. Then, taking the slide with the ferocious-looking Red Indian executing a war dance depicted thereon, I placed it in the lantern. After some delay, a great deal of sham incantation, and so forth, I suddenly removed the cap, and instantaneously the

figure appeared life-size on the opposite wall. He looked for a moment or two aghast, and then, with a howl of terror, rushed out of the cabin. The girls, too, were infected with his panic fear, and also screamed and ran out. Before I knew what he was about, he had clambered up the rigging, over the boarding netting, and without a moment's hesitation leaped into the sea, and commenced swimming for the land, distant at least four miles.

Whether he would reach it or not I could not say; but, at all events, I did not intend to allow him so to do if I could prevent it.

As soon as possible I reassured the women, and got their assistance in lowering the boat. In five minutes she was in the sea, and we were in. And now, for the first time for a year and three months, I have left the ship.

As from the boat I look on the great black hull of what has been for so long a time my floating prison, strange thoughts sweep through my mind.

Alone on the ocean! Is it possible that for so long a time I have been sole tenant of that big ship, or is it but a dream? There she lies, lazily, slowly tossing up and down with the solemn Pacific swell—covered with barnacles, rusty, dingy, and half dismantled—she looks like a ghost of a ship, floating on a ghostly ocean.

A deserted wreck on the boundless sea, and yet my only home! I felt, for a moment or two, an irrepresible desire to leave her for ever, to run ashore and take my chance. It seemed to me as though the spell were broken now that I was clear of the ship.

But a little consideration showed me the folly of any such course, and I saw clearly that my only hope of ultimate safety was to stick to the ship.

By an effort I dispelled the dream-like fancies which crowded on my mind, and devoted all my energies to the present.

The savage was now fully a quarter of a mile away from the vessel, and swimming vigorously for the island.

I had made two paddles for the boat for my projected expedition, knowing that the girls did not know how to row with oars and rowlocks.

Giving each of them one so soon as the tackle was unhooked and the boat clear of the ship, I bade them paddle away as fast as they could.

I myself, standing in the bow of the boat, directed the course.

The fugitive swam well and vigorously, so that the boat gained on him but slowly.

Intent on the chase, determined to recapture him, I had not noticed that a heavy squall was rising in the eastern sky, and there were other indications of a storm.

About half-way between the reef and the vessel the boat came up with the native, who was now all but exhausted by the great exertions he had made.

Seeing that it was useless to struggle on, he gave up, sullenly enough, and I managed to drag him on board the boat. Then I turned to look for the ship.

My heart stood still—she was not in sight!

The moon was hidden by clouds, the whole sky rapidly becoming overcast, and over the surface of the sea rain and mist hid everything from view.

And just at this moment, too, a breeze arose, and I remembered that I had left the foresail hanging unfurled from the yard.

The wind was now from the southward, and it seemed but too probable that the vessel would be driven out to sea.

Seizing an oar, I commenced sculling as hard as I could, calling out to the women also to paddle away their hardest. They, though not understanding me, obeyed, and the boat glided through the water at a good pace.

Presently we were enveloped in a squall of rain, which came down in torrents, and rendered it utterly impossible for us to see five yards from the boat.

Now that it was too late I bitterly regretted my folly in not taking the precaution to notice the threatening appearance of the sky before lowering the boat.

Better far would it have been to let the captive escape than run the risk of losing the ship.

However, it was too late now, and all I could do was to row on in the direction I thought most likely, and trust to come up with her.

But, as ill luck would have it, the sky grew yet more overcast, and the surface of the sea more enveloped in mist, so that after an hour's hard work with oar and paddles I was fain to cease, not only from fatigue, but from the obvious hopelessness of rowing on.

What was to be done?

Wait and hope!

That was all the answer I could find to my question.

All through that dreary night I drifted about in the boat, ignorant in which direction lay the land—where the ship should be—for the moon had set, and the whole surface of the surrounding sea was wrapt in an impenetrable veil of rain and mist.

I began to despair, and, resting myself in the bow of the boat, buried my face in my hands and prayed for help from above!

The two girls sat motionless, paddle in hand, frightened, and yet not understanding the magnitude of the disaster.

Morning's light would probably reveal to our anxious gaze the island, but not the ship; the latter would probably be blown far away to sea before the fresh breeze.

Thus, then, we should find ourselves in an open boat, without arms, or anything which could answer the purpose, save a boat-hook, without food or water, and with no prospect before us but that of landing on an island the inhabitants of which thirsted for the lives of three of us.

It seemed an alternative between death by thirst, starvation, and drowning at sea, or death at the hands of the savages ashore.

I resolved to accept the latter.

If the worst came to the worst, I would land, endeavour to conciliate them, and, failing that, boat-hook in hand, I would sell my life as dearly as possible.

With this resolution in my mind, I dropped off into a deep dreamless sleep.

I awoke suddenly.

A strange sound broke on my ears.

A harsh screaming noise!

I looked around the boat, but could see nothing.

Sea and sky were still enveloped in a thick haze, amidst which a drizzling rain was falling.

What could be the cause of the noise?

A harsh grating discordant scream!

Listening intently, I presently heard other sounds—a creaking noise, and a faint rushing or rippling sound.

It was about an hour before sunlight, and, as I gazed with eager eyes, gradually a dim dark shape grew out of the mist, and all at once I shouted wildly, "The ship! the ship!" and knew that we were saved.

The creaking noise was caused by the spars and cordage, the rippling by the wash of the sea under her bows, as she slowly moved through the water.

I cried to the women to use the paddles, and, myself seizing the oar, steered the boat alongside. In a few seconds I was on board, and made fast the painter to the rail.

Thus ended what might have been indeed a fatal adventure.

It should have been deeply impressed on my mind, to serve as a warning for the future; but, strange to say, when once I was again safely on deck, I thought but little more on the subject.

The screaming noise which had first awakened me and attracted my attention was caused by the falcon, which, probably dissatisfied at being left alone, had thus manifested its displeasure.

As the sun rose, the mist cleared off, and the heavy clouds dissipated. I beheld the island—a mere dot on the horizon—distant, I should say, about fifteen miles. I at once set to work and got steam up, so as to fetch back to the neighbourhood of the land, which I accomplished by about an hour before sundown.

Nothing more of note happened for a week; I meanwhile keeping a bright look-out for a favourable opportunity of putting my other project into operation.

CHAPTER XXXIX.

ONCE MORE ON SHORE.

At last the time has come. A sea like glass, a moonlight cloudless night, a dead calm!

My opportunity was come, and I proceeded at once to put my project into execution. In the first place, I put provisions and a keg of water into the boat; also firearms and a couple of cutlasses, with ammunition and such other articles as I thought necessary.

Then I proceeded to make my captive safe; for I did not intend him to take advantage of the absence of myself and the women to escape.

I made him go down into the forecabin, and then putting the scuttle on, fastened it down. "I shall know where to find you, my fine fellow, when I come back," I said to myself.

All being in readiness, I lowered the boat, and embarked in her. I had taken the precaution to provide a small compass, and now proceeded to take the relative bearings of the land and ship. The vessel lay about half a mile from the reef, and I could plainly see the gap in the thin white line where the surf broke over the coral.

Everything seemed propitious, so, sitting in the stern of the boat, with the tiller ropes in my hand, I bade my boat's crew—Ruth and Rachel—"give way," and the boat was quietly paddled towards the reef.

When we passed through into this lagoon, I told them to stop rowing for a bit, and standing up in the stern-sheets, proceeded to reconnoitre.

All was quiet—no signs of life or motion. Before me lay the island—all nature apparently sunk in a deep repose; behind me the ship and the calm sea. I took my seat again, and cautiously the boat steered towards the island. Arrived within a hundred yards of the beach, I turned her head to the eastward, and commenced skirting the shore, looking out for a convenient creek or nook in which the boat might lie concealed while I and my companions went inland.

I was not long without finding a place I thought suitable—an inlet which ran up with a winding course from the sandy beach.

Steering the boat up this, I turned her in under some overhanging trees, and telling one of the girls to make her fast, myself leaped ashore.

Once more on land, after having been on the sea for a year and five months nearly!

It was a strange sensation, and I actually staggered a little at first. So accustomed had I become to the perpetual motion (however slight at times) of the vessel, heaved up and down by the swell, that the solidity and motionlessness of the *terra firma* seemed quite strange and inexplicable to me.

While the women were fastening up the boat I busied myself with getting out the guns and ammunition.

I myself carried a double-barrelled shot gun, to Ruth I handed another, while Rachel carried a rifle, all loaded of course.

In my belt I carried two revolvers, and had given one to each of my companions.

Previous to embarking on this expedition I had done my best to instruct them in the use of the firearms, but must say that I was not well satisfied with the result. They trembled greatly, and seemed very reluctant when I first insisted on their firing off a gun; and although I put in only a very small charge, they declared that it hurt them. I guessed, however, that it was fear, not pain, which made them reluctant to repeat the experiment.

They promised, however, that in case we were attacked they would shoot bravely, and I really believed that they would fire the pieces off, though with what effect I could not say.

The pistols they got on better with, for although they would shut their eyes and turn away their heads before discharging them, yet they would previously level them pretty correctly at the object they wished to hit.

All this I had ascertained before leaving the ship, and felt tolerably confident and easy in my mind.

Besides the firearms, each of the women carried a

cutlass, well sharpened, as did I, and also a small hatchet, or tomahawk, which might be useful in cutting down branches of trees, or for any other purposes.

My intention was to penetrate to the interior of the island, gain a lofty spot, whence I could command a view of the sea and ship, and then commence an exploration of the island.

I hoped by great caution, and lying concealed during a great part of the day, to escape observation.

The natives would see the ship still out at sea, and would, I thought, as a matter of course, suppose that things were exactly as before, not dreaming that I, the dreaded enemy, was in their midst.

The boat having been hauled close in shore, so as to be concealed as much as possible by the overhanging branches, I started inland.

Marching in Indian file, we started, and cautiously made our way through the thick brush, and soon became aware that in places there was a sort of path, the brushwood seemingly having been broken off by some means.

In a little while I discovered footprints on the ground where it was at all damp and soft, and, on closer examination, found that they were not those of man, but of animals, and soon became convinced that this was a track used by the small deer I had seen from the deck of the ship.

Steadily pushing on, we soon emerged from the brushwood, and entered a forest of great trees—cocoanut, banana, bread-fruit, and iron-wood, and a tall straight tree, with which I was entirely unacquainted.

More than once a rustling, followed by a rushing sound, and the pattering of quick feet, told that we had disturbed some animal; but though there was a moon, it was not light enough amidst those primitive shades to distinguish objects at any considerable distance.

So onward we pushed, heading along up the hill and towards the interior of the island.

Halting every few minutes, I listened for any sound which might indicate the neighbourhood of man; but nothing broke on my watchful ear, and for more than

an hour we continued our journey, slowly making our way through the dense wood.

Had I not known full well that there were human beings on the island, I might have been led to suppose that it was uninhabited; the silence, the absence of all signs of man's work in these primeval woods, might well have caused such an idea to arise in my mind. After toiling on for about two hours, we emerged suddenly from the forest into an open space covered by soft green turf.

From the opposite end of this patch of clear ground there arose abruptly a conical-shaped hillock, just so steep as to render ascent a matter of some little difficulty.

I judged that this place was about the centre of the island, and the peak one that I had often noticed from the sea as the highest point in the island.

After looking round cautiously to satisfy myself that there lurked no savages in ambush, I gave the word to my two companions to follow me, and commenced to clamber up in order to reach the summit.

I say clamber up, because I was forced to sling my gun over my shoulder, and use my hands as well as feet.

The girls were nimble and active, and made easier work of it than I did, notwithstanding that their dresses were in their way.

Arrived at the summit, I threw myself on the ground to rest for a few moments to recover breath, and then took a survey.

Glorious was the scene spread out before my eyes. From where I stood I could command a view of the whole island, and the sea and islets around, east, west, north, and south.

The moon's light seemed to flood the whole picture as in a bath of silver glory. The calm grandeur of the scene it is impossible to convey any idea of to the reader. Beneath me lay the dark forest through which we had threaded our way; then the brushwood of a lighter hue; and lastly, the white sandy beach, the quiescent water of the lagoon, glistening in the moonlight, the thin line of white where the waves rippled on

the reef, and beyond the boundless ocean, on which floated motionless, like a ghost ship, the vessel I had left. It was hard to realize the scene—harder still to drink my fill of its loveliness and delicious repose.

To the north I could discern no object on the broad expanse of sea, nor to the west nor the east, save the ship.

But to the southward the surface of the ocean was dotted with many little islands, all contiguous, or nearly adjoining.

I counted twenty, forming a sort of chain, with only very small intervals between each.

I had now an opportunity of verifying the map or chart I had made of the island, and satisfied myself that it was tolerably correct.

I remained so long gazing at the fairy-like panorama spread beneath me, that it was not until a faint light in the east proclaimed the approach of dawn, that I thought it was time to think of returning.

Before retracing my steps, however, I climbed to the very highest point of the peak where we were, and made a little pile of stones.

"Here," I said, "I will, ere long, plant the British flag, and take possession of the island in the name of her Britannic Majesty Queen Victoria."

A somewhat audacious promise on my part, under all the circumstances, but one that I thoroughly meant to carry out.

I found, as had many more before me, without doubt, that it was a much more difficult thing to descend than to go up; and it was not without several slips and danger of falling that I got down from the peak.

From hence our course was easy, as I could make out the track by which we had come.

The sun was above the horizon as I approached the spot where the boat had been left.

When within twenty yards I could not see it, and said to myself,—

"The boat has been well concealed; and one might pass quite close and never know that it lay there under the boughs."

My self-gratulation did not last long.

A few more paces, and my heart sank within me. The boat was gone!

I could scarcely believe my eyes,—hoped that I had been mistaken in the place,—and tried in a thousand ways to account for the too obvious fact that the boat was not there.

But the hope of a mistake having been made in the place was soon dissipated. I saw the very bough to which the boat had been made fast. It was broken short off; but beyond that there was no clue. It might have been broken off by a man; or it was, at all events, possible that it had broken by the strain of the boat on it. And now I noticed that the water in the creek was much lower than when we had landed.

Now I had it.

The tide had fallen, and no scope having been left, the mere weight of the boat had broken the branch; it had drifted out into the lagoon.

So soon as I arrived at this solution of the mystery, I hastened to follow the course of the creek downwards to the sea, hoping every minute to get sight of the lost boat.

I said nothing to the girls, but I saw by their frightened looks that they discerned in my face abundant evidence of some great disaster.

I could not keep back the terrible thought which would rise in my mind,—“Suppose the boat has been stolen, and I am left here alone amidst these savages.”

I had only a few charges of ammunition; and this expended, I felt but too sure that I should be unable to keep the savages at bay.

Already I had had some experience of their ferocity and obstinacy on the occasion of the first attack, when even the slaughter of their comrades could not daunt them. I could not but call to mind, too, the fierce untameable nature of my prisoner on board the ship. Though wounded, and utterly at my mercy, I could not subdue his stubborn sullen spirit; and every time he looked at me—even when obeying my commands—it was with a glance of hatred and defiance, as though he

said,—“My turn will come, and then I will have vengeance!”

Our progress down the creek was slow; for I took pains to explore every nook and cranny where it was possible the boat could be concealed.

All in vain.

No boat was in the creek; and as I rounded the last bend, the sad conviction went home to my mind.

I realized all the peril of the situation. Whether discovered and removed by the savages, or drifted away by the stream, in either case there was imminent danger. In the latter and most favourable one, the boat would be out in the lagoon, and we could only reach it by swimming.

In doing so, of course we could not help wetting our guns and ammunition; and so, when we had gained the boat, should be almost defenceless.

Nor could I reasonably hope to swim out to the boat without being seen; for I had again and again noticed, when cruising outside the reef in the ship, that the natives were astir betimes, and that shortly after sunrise many of them went down to the beach to bathe. It was, then, almost a certainty that the boat would have been seen and taken possession of.

When, then, we emerged from the wood, which rounded the creek or inlet on either side, on to the open beach, I was not so very much surprised at what met my eyes.

About two hundred yards to the west I saw the boat close in shore.

Three savages were there also in possession; one walked along the beach, while two others were in the boat, standing up and paddling it in the direction of the village or town.

I took all this in at a glance, and quickly came to the determination to get back the boat at any risk.

There were only three of them, and we too were three, and well armed, so I had not much fear as to the result.

Calling out to the girls to follow me, I ran as fast as I could towards the savages, shouting at the top of my

voice, hoping thereby to frighten them and cause them to leave the boat.

It had some such effect, but did not work exactly in the way I wished ; for after a momentary pause on the part of all three, the fellow on shore commenced running as fast as he could, and those in the boat paddled as hard as they could.

I gained on the boat, however, although the man on shore soon outstripped me in running.

When about a hundred yards off I stopped, dropped on one knee, and fired both barrels of the gun I carried. The first was loaded with bullet and missed.

The second was large shot, and a yell from the two in the boat told me that I had peppered them.

Now, however, they took a course which was to me most unsatisfactory, for they instantly commenced paddling away from the shore.

I snatched both rifles from the women and ran on about twenty yards.

It was a matter of deep moment. I must kill these fellows, or else they would escape with the boat. So I took a careful aim and fired the first rifle.

I saw the fellow start and drop his paddle, and hoped at first that I had hit him. But it was only the whistle of the bullet which had alarmed him.

Then the other rifle.

This time I do believe that, at the least, I grazed the fellow I aimed at, for he, too, started and fell in the boat.

He soon rose again, however, and as I hastened to reload, I knew to my intense chagrin that he was unhurt.

And now they adopted another course, which seemed likely utterly to defeat me.

They commenced throwing everything out of the boat, and before I was ready to fire again had both leaped overboard, and were swimming rapidly in a direction parallel with the shore.

Each of them took with him one of the paddles, whether as an assistance in swimming or, as I had too good reason to fear, with the deliberate intention of de-

priving me of the means of rowing the boat, I could not say.

The fellow on shore had previously run off with the only oar, and now the boat was without either that or paddles.

For a time I did not know what to do ; and as soon as I had loaded the rifle, blazed away at the nearest savage in the water.

I could only see his head, and as he was quite a hundred and fifty yards off, it is not surprising that I missed.

However, I was not far off, for I saw the splash of the bullet in the water, only a few feet from his head.

After this I ceased firing, and turned my attention to the boat.

It was only about two hundred yards from the beach ; but how to get at it—that was the question, and one not easily answered.

I waited for a few moments, and watched its course.

It was shifting in a diagonal direction away from the shore and towards the reef.

Each moment it was being carried farther away from us.

Here was a dilemma, indeed.

The only way to reach it was by swimming.

Of course it was impossible to swim without wetting the guns and ammunition, even if it were practicable to support their weight in the water.

This was really a serious matter, and I knew not what to do.

Delay, however, would be, in this case, not only dangerous but certain ruin, so I at once made up my mind that the guns must be abandoned, and the boat reached by swimming.

Instantly I threw all three in the water, but marked the spot by means of a large white stone.

I was a tolerable swimmer, and the women were like fish in the water, so there was no fear of our failing to reach the boat.

It struck me, however, that though the guns must be abandoned I might manage to keep a revolver and the powder dry.

I gave the best of the pistols to Ruth, and told her by words and signs that I wished her to hold it above her head with one hand, so that it should not get wet.

She understood me, and signified eagerly that she could do it.

Then to Rachel I gave the powder horn, and explained to her what I wished in the same way.

I threw the cutlasses into the sea, and proceeded to divest myself of everything except the shirt and canvass trousers. I kept the little hatchet, however, as I thought that I was a sufficiently powerful swimmer to support that without trouble.

And I saw that it would be useful—indispensable, indeed; for as the savages had taken away the oar and paddles, I should want some kind of a substitute in order to propel the boat.

I bethought me of the thwarts or seats across the boats. I could cut these out in a very short time, and use them as paddles.

Then I plunged into the sea and commenced swimming towards the boat, the women following my example—having first, however, disencumbered themselves of their gowns, which they left on the shore.

Almost at the instant I entered the water a whole fleet of canoes rounded a point of land about half a mile to the eastward.

They were steering in a direction to intercept me and prevent me reaching the boat.

The canoes were nearly half a mile away, however, whereas only about a hundred and fifty yards separated me from the boat.

It was a question of time and speed, and, fully aware of the desperate nature of the situation, I strained every nerve and swam with all my strength.

The two women were like fish in the water, and despite the fact that each of them held a hand high and dry out of water, outstripped me easily.

Soon, however, I saw that I should reach the boat before the canoes could come up. Still there was no time to spare, and I did not relax in my exertions for an instant.

As I got alongside the boat and clambered in, the foremost canoe was not more than a hundred yards distant.

The women had already got into the boat, and my first act was to seize the revolver Rachel had carried, and inspect it to see that the charges had not been wetted.

The bow of the boat was turned from the advancing canoes, so, crouching in the stern sheets, I looked out and proceeded to get a good rest for the pistol. For it was, I knew, a case of life or death, and an accurate aim was indispensable.

Extended almost at full length in the stern sheets, I was enabled to rest the pistol barrel on the gunwale, and with only a portion of my head exposed, could take a steady aim.

Standing up in the bow of the first canoe was a tall savage holding a long spear.

At him I deliberately levelled the pistol, aiming at his middle, and fired.

That my shot was a true one was instantly apparent, for he dropped his spear, and clapping his hand to his throat, fell backwards in the canoe.

I learned from this that the pistol threw high as I had aimed at the pit of his stomach, while the bullet had evidently struck him in the neck.

This was a warning for the future, and next time I determined to aim at the level of the knees.

The effect of this shot was to cause a stoppage in the onward progress of the canoes.

All ceased paddling, but nevertheless the light craft floated on some yards.

I could now distinctly see the features and hear the cries of the savages. In the second canoe was a grey-headed old man, who, standing up, was gesticulating violently and haranguing the rest.

My knowledge of the language was not sufficient for me to make out all he said, but I could gather that he was urging the warriors to the attack.

Taking careful aim at the middle of the leg, I fired at this fellow, and had the satisfaction of seeing him fall

back, and hearing his loud yell of terror and pain as he felt the sting of the little pistol-bullet.

After this the enemy sheered off and the whole fleet lay to at about two hundred and fifty yards from the boat.

They were quite out of spear shot, so I rose from my crouching position, and with my tomahawk attacked one of the thwarts of the boat, which in a few minutes I cut through; then, splitting it down the middle, I proceeded to shape it into rough paddles.

But while I was doing this I did not observe a manœuvre on the part of the enemy, which might well cause me alarm.

The vessel lay outside the reef, nearly opposite the boat, and distant from the coral barrier less than half a mile, having drifted in closer during the night. I now observed two canoes had separated from the main body, and were gliding through the water towards a passage in the reef, perhaps little more than half a mile away from the fleet, which lay between my boat and the gap.

I noticed that many of the savages were standing up and looking towards the vessel; and doing the same myself, I saw, to my astonishment and dismay, a column of smoke arising from her fore part.

This to me was utterly inexplicable at first, but presently came the terrible thought, *the prisoner has broken loose and set fire to her!*

I at once saw that nothing but my immediate presence on board could save her.

But how to get on board?

The fleet of canoes was between me and the gap in the reef through which I had entered, *and I could see no other opening.*

Then, too, I now perceived that the two canoes were making straight for this passage; and the idea flashed across my mind that they were going out to the ship.

It was of vital importance that I should get on board first.

But I could not get the boat over the reef, and to fight my way through or past the fleet of canoes might be

possible; but it was certainly dangerous, and would occupy some time.

I quickly made up my mind.

Motioning the girls to use the paddles, I pointed to the reef, and in half a minute the keel of the boat was grinding on the coral barrier.

It was low water, and a line of reef about a yard wide was bare, or only occasionally washed by the waves.

I handed the revolver to Rachel, having reloaded the two barrels, and then, shouting to them to follow me, leaped on to the reef, and plunged into the sea.

All at once from out of the crest of a wave a man's head appeared, and I found myself grasped by my one time prisoner, into whose arms I had leaped!

CHAPTER XL.

I EXPLORE THE SOUTHERN ISLANDS.

I KNOW not which was most frightened—I or he.

With a loud cry, he seized me by the hair and sought to force my head under water.

But with one hand I got hold of a piece of projecting coral, and with the other endeavoured to draw the small hatchet from my waistband.

At first I could not succeed, and when I did was unable to deal any effective blow, by reason of my enemy's head being too close.

He now shifted his hold and grasped me by the throat with one hand, while with the other he still held my hair.

Letting go my hold on the rock, I grappled with him, striking him full in the face with my fist. In the struggle I let fall the tomahawk, and now found myself contending in the water with a naked savage, a much better swimmer than myself.

Twice we went under together, locked in a close embrace—fighting like two tiger-cats.

But at this juncture the brave girl Rachel came to my assistance. She leaped into the sea, taking the

improvised paddle in her hand, and every time our heads came to the surface she dealt my enemy a succession of sharp blows.

Ruth, too, now followed the example of her companion, and this double attack decided the contest in my favour.

The savage suddenly loosened his grasp, slipped from my hold like an eel, and disappeared by diving. He rose some ten yards off, struck out for the reef, and clambered up.

I saw him for a moment, the blood streaming down his face (for the claws of Ruth and Rachel were sharp ones), and then he leaped into the calm water of the lagoon, and swam away towards the canoes, which, no doubt, he soon reached.

This affair, though it had not taken up much time, had delayed me long enough to suffer the two canoes to reach the passage in the reef; they were now heading for the vessel.

But they were more than double the distance from the ship than I was, and I thought it possible to get alongside by swimming before they could; so I at once struck out. "Quick—quick!" I cried to the girls, who instantly commenced darting through the water like dolphins. Seeing that I could not keep pace with them, one placed herself on either side of me, and placing one hand under my arms helped me on at a much greater speed than I could have attained by my own exertions. The race now became most exciting. The revolver pistol had been dropped and lost in the *melée*, as had the tomahawk, so that we were all three totally unarmed. To reach the vessel was our only chance; and my companions seemed to realize the peril of our position, for they swam faster than I should have ever thought possible, cleaving the water like mermaids or fishes.

I should say that in five minutes from the time we left the reef we were within a cable's length of the ship.

The two canoes, however, were also dangerously close—not more than two hundred and fifty yards from her.

In another minute we were close alongside, but the enemy was within spear-shot, which fact I first became aware of by a shower falling all around. One struck me in the back under water, and remained there sticking. Ruth too received one in her left arm, but the brave girl instantly drew it out and swam on.

The next moment we passed under the stern and were out of sight of the savages.

Swimming up under the quarter, I seized a rope, which hung over, and managed to clamber up into the mizen-channels and thence on board. The girls quickly followed, and once more I found myself standing on the deck of the ship—monarch of all I surveyed, as I fondly persuaded myself.

A rapid glance around told me that the smoke which had alarmed me was issuing from the fore-castle scuttle. I had no time to see to it then, however, for scarcely had I gained the deck aft than I became aware that the enemy were clambering in over the bows.

I did not lose my presence of mind, but remembering the old adage, "more haste less speed," proceeded to load some guns which stood round the mizenmast. The cartridges were in a box close by, and in the space of less than two minutes I had four rifles loaded.

Meanwhile the savages had cut a way through the boarding netting, and there were now five or six on board.

A flight of spears, which fortunately did no harm, warned me to hasten, and dropping on one knee aimed at the foremost of them.

My aim was good and true, and good fortune attended that shot—for it passed right through the body of him I shot at, and wounded another behind him. Scarcely had his death cry rung out than I fired again, and this time killed a warrior dead. The rifle bullet passed through his brain.

I had still two more pieces loaded, and as quickly as possible fired them, bringing down two more of my foes.

Thus, by the four shots I had hit five men, and caused very considerable dismay to the others, who did not seem prepared for, or to understand, this whole-

sale slaughter of their comrades. I did not wait to load again, confident that I could by a bold rush put the remaining savages to flight. Telling the women, however, to load again in case of need, I seized a cutlass, and with a loud shout rushed forward to the attack. Several spears were thrown at me, all of which fortunately missed. The warriors sprang upon the rail at my approach, and there stood at bay. The first fellow I attacked made a lunge at me with his long spear, but I dodged the thrust, caught the weapon in my left hand, and slashed away at his bare legs with the cutlass. With a howl of pain he dropped the spear, and, scrambling through the broken netting, leaped into the sea. A second one whom I attacked wounded me slightly in the shoulder with his spear-point, but I closed with him before he could do me further mischief, and drove the sword into his body.

This settled the affair. The remainder of the savages clambered back into the canoes, or leaped into the sea, and I was left absolute emperor—once more master of the ship.

To make sure that they would not come back, I took two double-barrelled guns, loaded them with shot, and fired on the canoes as they paddled away. The cries and screams of pain as they felt the sharp sting of the shot, sufficiently attested the fact that the intended effect had been produced; and I had the satisfaction of seeing the two canoes go back through the passage in the reef to the rest of the fleet.

Of the five men I had shot, three wounded had crawled over the bulwarks and got back into the canoes. Two, however, were stone dead, and now lay extended on the deck; these I hastily dragged upon the fore-castle and threw overboard.

I then went aft and proceeded to attend to my own hurts, and that of Rachel, who had been wounded in the arm by a spear. The weapon had passed right through the limb, grazing the bone; and before I thought of my own hurts, I carefully and tenderly dressed that of this large-hearted girl.

My worst wound was in the back, between the

shoulders, and this the women attended to as best they could.

Towards evening I felt hot and feverish, and my hurt was more painful and inflamed.

Under these circumstances I resolved to stand out to sea and relinquish any further attempt on this island until all were quite recovered.

So I got up steam, and starting the engine, the vessel steamed slowly and majestically away from this lovely but inhospitable island. I stopped her about eight miles off, at which distance the high central peak of Tongadoo could be plainly made out.

For a week I lay off and did not approach any nearer to the land. My wound was stubborn in healing, the bone of the shoulder having been injured by the spear point. The intense heat was against me too, and at one time I really feared that this hurt would have a fatal termination. But fortunately things took a favourable turn; and thanks to an excellent constitution, and great care and attention on behalf of the two young women, I began to mend. On the eighth day the fever left me; and though I was very weak, my appetite returned, and I was confident of soon being well.

The wound in the arm had commenced to heal, as had that of the girl Rachel; and there was every prospect of both of us being quite well in a few days.

Nov. 1st, 1855.—A fortnight to-day since I received the hurt. It is now nearly well, and I am fast regaining health and strength.

I have made up my mind not to attempt a landing again, or to communicate in any way with the natives, until I am fully recovered, and as strong and active as ever.

I cannot forget that I should have perished in the last adventure had I not been in full vigour.

I have been occupying myself in clearing up the ship and making some alterations and repairs in the rude mechanism of my paddlewheels. I find that the holes in which the shaft revolves are being worn larger by the constant friction, so have lined them with sheet tin; this latter I procured from some cases of goods, the con-

tents of which were thus protected from damp. This has had a very sensible effect, and as it greatly diminishes the friction, it also increases the speed of the vessel, the paddles working so much easier.

To-morrow I go on a cruise to the southward to explore the group of small islands, take note of their characteristics, and mark them down on my chart. This will occupy me about a week, at the end of which time I hope to be as strong and vigorous as ever.

The weather continues beautiful—the climate is simply lovely—calms, and gentle zephyrs, just sufficient to fill the sails, alternating.

The wind has been from off the island to-day, and a number of shore birds have foolishly suffered themselves to be wafted away. This has been a source of great sport, both to me and the falcon.

And not only sport, but also a pleasant variety of food have these land birds brought us.

My hunting bird caught a small green parrot, after a short but exciting chase, for it was very swift, quick of wing, and turned and doubled with great adroitness. The flesh of this bird was rank and not good to eat, as also was that of a species of gull, which I conjectured by the flavour, fed on fish.

But the pigeons, and a sort of bird something between a thrush and a partridge, were delicious eating. I skinned and preserved the plumage of all these; as, if ever I revisit a civilized land, I wish to have a museum of curiosities, to remind me of the time when I was alone on the ocean.

My garden has now attained a condition of wonderful luxuriance. The vegetables and plants have grown so fast and thick that I am in want of more soil.

I shall endeavour to get some from some of the small islands to the southward. From what I saw in my former cursory examination, I am of opinion that some of them are uninhabited.

The grains of barley I planted have all germinated, and are just coming into ear. The paddy, or Indian rice, however, does not seem to have taken successfully; perhaps the soil is not suitable.

The Indian corn stalks are now five feet high, and the ears are beginning to form. As for the pumpkins or gourds, they have attained an enormous size, and every day I regale myself with "pumpkin pie." The leaves, too, keep on in regular succession, so that I have no lack of vegetables. As to the creepers, they have all burst into flower, and the foremast presents a most gorgeous appearance; it looks like a huge tree smothered in verdure.

I must have more mould. The bits of vegetables resembling potatoe, which I planted, have taken root.

I believe it is a kind of yam, but the few inches of mould is not sufficient—the roots have already struck right down to the deck.

I must have more soil.

Nov. 9TH, '55.—I have just returned from an exploring expedition to the southern islands.

Taking advantage of a favourable wind, I started under sail to the southward.

By evening the ship had gone some twenty miles, and the island of Tongadoo was no longer visible.

I hove to about two bells in the second dog-watch, about a mile and a half from a group or chain of these small islands, intending in the morning to steer cautiously in shore, and ascertain all I could about them. I will briefly give the result of my researches.

These islands were very numerous, and extended much farther south than I thought. They were mostly small, low, and level, nothing nearly so beautiful and fertile in appearance as Tongadoo. Nevertheless, they were all covered with verdure, although there were few trees on any, and on some none at all. Many were crescent shaped, and some consisted merely of a ring of land enclosing a sea-lake of calm blue water. Outside that ring of land there was usually a coral reef. Other of these lakes or lagoons were not entirely encircled by land, but only by a number of islets very close together.

On some of those islands I saw signs of human habitations, but many of the smaller ones seemed, to all appearance, to be destitute of the human race.

The origin of all these islands is attributable to the

coral insect. According to naturalists this wonderful little creature, commencing its erections at the bottom of the sea, after the lapse of centuries carries them up to the surface, when its labours cease; then the coral collects all floating matter, birds drop seeds, and in time vegetable productions spring up; the leaves and stalks of these decay, and in time there is thus formed a layer of mould.

Here and there numbers of naked detached patches of coral are to be seen. These would appear to be islands in the course of formation, and in some hundred years time may be as fertile and lovely as Tongadoo.

One island particularly attracted my attention, and here I resolved to land, and take a boatload of soil to increase my garden.

To the northward of it was a small round island, not more than four feet above the level of the sea; on this there was neither tree nor vegetation of any kind—it was a round spot of barren white sand dotted down amidst the blue ocean.

But beyond it was the island of which I speak—smothered in verdure, lovely as a poet's dream. When first I saw it a tropical sunset was throwing its glories around, bathing it in a flood of golden light.

There was a reef all round this beautiful spot, and I soon discovered a narrow passage into the lagoon.

I could tell that it was inhabited, but judged only by a very few, as the whole diameter of the island was not more than half a mile; and being low, no congregation of huts or men could have escaped me.

I steered the ship within a couple of cables length of the reef, and then dropped the kedge anchor, which I had previously got in readiness, and attached to a small hauser.

This brought the vessel up, and she lay quietly riding at anchor, for the first time since we had set sail from Sydney harbour, a year and five months previously.

I now proceeded to lower the boat, in order to go ashore; but this time I resolved to leave Ruth on board the ship, taking with me in the boat only Rachel. The former I directed to remain in the foretop, and if any

canoes were seen approaching, or indeed if anything at all happened, to give me warning thereof by hoisting a flag.

This done, Rachel and I started on our errand, of course well armed, and resolved to be cautious and prudent.

I sat in the stern sheets, while the girl, standing up, skilfully used the paddle.

On we glided through the narrow passage in the reef, over which the waves broke on either side in a line of white foam, and presently entered on the calm blue waters of the lagoon.

No living thing was to be seen, and for aught I knew I might have been the first mortal, probably the first European, who had ever set eyes on this islet of the sea.

On landing and cautiously proceeding inland, I found the soil to consist of a rich black mould; and having brought a spade, bucket, and sack, at once commenced to load the boat. This occupied a couple of hours, and then I started for the interior of the island. I found no trees and no sign of cultivation. Nature here had done all—man nothing. I gathered some bananas and also some berries, and then returned to the boat and put off to the ship, which I safely reached this time without adventure.

The soil was a most welcome addition to my garden, which I forthwith proceeded to enlarge and deepen the mould; and thus gave room for the vegetables and plants to spread and deepen.

I set great store by my cereals, all of which were coming on splendidly.

The only fruit I found on this little island was a species of small banana, of which I picked two bushes, weighing about thirty pounds each.

As I passed back through the channel I sounded, and found that there was water enough for the ship to sail in. Nevertheless, I determined that I would not take up my abode here, but abide by my original intention, and make my temporary home at Tongadoo. I had not forgotten my dream.

CHAPTER XLI.

MY PADDLEWHEELS ARE DRST YED.

BEFORE returning to this old cruising ground off Tongadoo, I resolved to explore still farther to the south, and ascertain if there were other islands or groups.

There was a gentle breeze from the westward, so I put the vessel under sail, and steered her in a direction parallel to the line of islets.

At night I stopped her way by heaving her to, and in the morning continued my course to the southward.

The breeze had freshened considerably, and now blew from the nor-west, so the vessel sped on merrily before it.

The barometer had been slowly falling for twenty-four hours, and the appearance of the day was not reassuring.

Nevertheless, so intent was I on my exploration that I paid no heed to these warning signs.

Shortly after noon a large island came in sight. I saw at once that it was inhabited; and, as the vessel drew nearer, was able to distinguish its characteristics.

It was not a lovely garden in the ocean, like Tongadoo, but mountainous and rugged.

The shore was rocky—not of soft white sand. I could see deep ravines and gullies, steep precipices, and frowning crags—inaccessible to all things save the sea birds, which there built their nests.

It did not seem by any means a barren place, for there was no lack of trees, etc.; but its verdure seemed of a different sort to that of the island I had left.

The very vegetation appeared to partake of the whole aspect of the island—bolder, rougher, stronger.

As I looked at the breakers beating on the rock shore, and saw the rude huts of the inhabitants, and their canoes on the beach, I could not help being impressed with a feeling that this island was inhabited by a much more powerful and warlike tribe than Tongadoo.

And yet on the latter score the people of the green isle

had not acquitted themselves badly. They had boldly attacked the ship, and not been beaten off without considerable slaughter.

I asked the women, who had been regarding the island with wondering curiosity, whether they could tell me anything about it and its inhabitants.

They could not say for certain, but thought that it must be the island of Amarka, where lived a very fierce and terrible sayage tribe, which had often made war on Tongadoo. Hitherto, her people had conquered, said Rachel, because the Amarkans had to come a long way in their canoes to attack them.

But I gathered from her that it was a hard fight, and that these savages were greatly dreaded at Tongadoo. Also that another attack was anticipated by them at the date when the women took refuge on board the ship.

I noticed, as I gazed on the shore, that there was all at once a great commotion; and in ten minutes a whole fleet of canoes was afloat on the lagoon, every one crowded with armed warriors.

After a brief delay all of them turned their prows seaward, and then it struck me that they were about to attack the ship.

She was lying off, and lay with her mainyard aback, and foretopsail lowered on the cap.

I had got steam up on the engine, and now proceeded with all haste to hoist the topsail, fill away the mainyard, and make all sail.

I was none too soon, for, like a pack of wolves, the whole fleet of canoes came dashing through the passage in the reef out into the open sea, each one propelled by a dozen paddles, in strong and skilful hands.

There was now a fresh breeze, but the vessel's hull was so covered with barnacles and seaweed adhering thereto, that she was very slow in gathering way.

Indeed, I had reason to fear that the savages would get alongside, and proceeded to make preparations for their reception and discomfiture.

I dragged the two cannons aft, and got their muzzles over the taffrail, and also proceeded to load a number of rifles and guns.

On came the canoes, until the foremost ones were within fifty yards.

Then, some savages, standing up in the forepart, commenced shooting arrows, which whistled over our heads among the rigging, some even sticking in the mizen-mast.

To avoid these I sent the girls below, and put up a screen of canvass abaft, so that they could not well hit me as I stood at the helm.

I also went below and started the engine, which I put in gear with the paddle machinery.

I wished to avoid an encounter if possible, having no desire to kill and wound these savages; my sole intentions having been first to explore the group of islands, and then go back to Tongadoo.

The paddlewheels caused the ship to go ahead at an increased rate. Nevertheless, by great exertion, the fleet of canoes kept up with us, the foremost ones even gaining.

When I went on deck again, after starting the engine, and looked astern, I saw one canoe, manned by a dozen warriors, within twenty yards.

The instant I showed my face a gigantic fellow, standing up in the prow, hurled a spear which stuck, quivering in the bulwarks within a foot of my head.

The affair was now getting serious, for several of the canoes still continued to gain on the ship.

I called up the women, placed Ruth at the helm, and told Rachel to attend upon me, and hand me loaded guns as fast as I fired.

I was determined that these savages should not come alongside, let happen what might. I had no wish for their blood; but if they obstinately rushed on their fate, I could not help it. Taking a rifle, I cautiously peered over the taffrail.

The foremost canoe was close under the stern, and the men were paddling with might and main to get alongside, when of course they would climb on board like so many wild cats.

This I resolved to prevent, and accordingly took aim at the nearest of the men who were paddling.

The bullet struck him on the left shoulder, and instantly with a loud yell he dropped his paddle and fell prone at the bottom of the boat, nearly oversetting the light craft and throwing all the other rowers into confusion. This stopped the foremost canoe, which quickly dropped astern.

But the next one, after a delay of only a moment or so, was urged on by the chief in command, who, standing up in the forepart brandishing a spear, urged his crew, as I judged, to redoubled exertions.

I was much surprised that they exhibited no alarm at the report of the rifle, and concluded that either they were acquainted with firearms, or were an unusually courageous people.

I thought it possible that they might not have known that their comrade in the first canoe was shot. In the hurry and heat of the pursuit they might have imagined that he had missed his stroke and fallen accidentally. But the report of the rifle they must have heard.

The affair had now become exciting, the situation desperate.

The savages in the canoe answered gamely to their chief's call, and they caused the light craft to shoot through the water at a wonderful rate, overhauling the ship foot by foot, until the prow of the canoe was absolutely abreast of the quarter.

In another half minute the canoe would have been abreast of the mizen chains, and then in a second or two I should have had half a score naked and ferocious warriors clambering on board.

This by no means suited my views, so, though somewhat loth, I drew a pistol and levelled it at the chief standing at the head of the first canoe.

He was a fine noble looking fellow—over six feet high and well formed—a picture of savage strength and activity.

It went to my heart to be obliged to shoot him ; but I had no alternative, so fired, taking aim at the centre of his heart. The result was astonishing.

Not, however, because my aim was good and the ball struck him, but from the effects that followed.

He fell backwards instantly, and in so doing knocked over the man nearest to him, who was diligently plying the paddle.

This one also fell, and both coming down on the edge of the gunwale of the canoe nearest the ship, the light and crank craft was overturned, and all on board precipitated into the water.

The other canoes following close astern stopped to pick up the swimmers.

I watched them do so, but noticed that the tall chief whom I had shot was not among the number. He had sunk; and I had the melancholy satisfaction of knowing that I had defended my ship at the sacrifice of another life.

But though I felt sad and heavy at heart, I could charge myself with no blame. By acting as I had done I had saved my own life and that of the two women whom I had rescued; for there could be no doubt that if we had fallen into the hands of the savages all would have been massacred.

The wind had now increased to a fresh breeze; and as it was nearly right aft, the vessel made such good progress through the water as to leave but small chance of the canoes again coming up with her.

The savages seemed aware of this, for after picking up their comrades who had been upset from the first canoe, they discontinued the chase.

We were now several miles from the land, and I thought it advisable to stop the engine, as there was no further need for haste.

And now that all immediate danger was past, I again noticed the threatening appearance of the sky. Going below to consult the barometer, I found, to my great discomfort, that it still continued falling steadily and fast. That a violent storm was brewing, there was no doubt, and at once I resolved to make preparations.

From the indications in the sky, and the gradual shifting of the wind, I felt pretty sure that the first blow would come from the north-west; and as that was the direction in which I wished to steer the ship, I set about brailing up and furling the sails.

In this I had the assistance of the two women—a small but zealous crew ; and after a couple of hours hard work, had managed to secure the canvas as I thought sufficiently.

This done, I got up steam and set the paddles to work, intending to get back to Tongadoo as soon as possible.

I was very tired when all had been done, and shortly after sunset went below and turned into my bunk.

Ruth was at the helm, and Rachel on the forecastle, to keep a good look-out.

I could thoroughly depend on both women, having taught them how to steer and understand the compass. I gave directions to Rachel to call me if anything unusual should occur, and Ruth I told to keep the vessel's head pointed to the N.N.E. until midnight, when I was to be called and myself take charge of the ship.

At twelve o'clock I was awakened, and to my great astonishment a change had indeed come over the scene.

A hard gale was raging, and the vessel, though still kept head to wind, pitched and yawed in a most dangerous manner. I only wonder how I could have slept so soundly, and scolded the women for not having called me sooner. In this I think I was wrong and unjust. They had obeyed my orders implicitly, and had called me at the exact time I named.

They knew that I was tired out, and when I reproached Rachel, she wept bitterly, and even tried to leap overboard.

This incident convinced me of the attachment my two companions had for me ; and after a bit I felt how unjust I was in scolding her, because she had implicitly obeyed my orders.

It was I who was to blame in not having told her to call me if there was any considerable change in the aspect of things.

There was a moon, but it only shone dimly through a thick curtain of clouds which kept sweeping up from the northward, and in dense compact masses, looking like a quantity of dark coloured wool tightly pressed together.

On consulting the barometer, I found that it continued to fall steadily, and everything betokened a furious tropical gale. Indeed I much feared that one of those terrible circular storms, called cyclones, was in the neighbourhood.

Should its whole force burst on the ship, the prospect of her safely weathering the gale was not a good one.

However, I wasted no time in gloomy anticipations of the future, but set to work with a will at the present duty of making all as snug as possible. It was a great misfortune that I had so long delayed doing so.

The only thing to be done under the circumstances was, I thought, to heave the vessel to, and trust that her hull would be strong enough to ride out the storm, and that what remained of her masts and spars would stand. Especially I feared the loss of the jury mizenmast, as I felt pretty sure that should that go, the pressure of the wind on the spars forward would be sufficient to cause her to pay off and scud before the gale. In such a case she might be pooped, as it is termed, by the heavy sea, or she might dash headlong on a rock shoal, or even land, without my having the slightest power to restrain her. Of course as a last resort I might let go the anchor if I perceived the land in time; but, on the other hand, she might get near to land in the darkness of night, and then nothing could save her from destruction. Or she might strike on a coral reef or sunken rock, which, amidst the fury of the storm, it was quite likely I should not make out even in daylight. The jury mizenmast was my great anxiety. If that would only stand, and carry the smallest possible sail, she might be kept hove to, and then would only drift slowly to leeward, and I might reasonably hope that the gale would have spent its fury before she had drifted more than twenty or thirty miles to the south east. And I felt pretty sure that there was no land within that distance of the place on the ocean where she now was. Accordingly, I hastened to set a small strong sail on the jurymast, lashed the helm a-lee, and then, with the aid of Rachel and Ruth, proceeded to rig preventer braces and stays to support the mast.

But though I did my best, I had great fears for the result. The ropes I was compelled to use were too light and weak; and, though I tautened them again and again, they still stretched so as to allow the mast a dangerous amount of play.

Of the two I believe it would have been more advantageous for the foremast to have gone, but that, however, was well supported by sound rigging, and both it and the topmast being sound good spars, it seemed likely they would both stand the storm.

Sleep was impossible, not only from the violent pitching of the ship, but by reason of great anxiety on my part, and terror on that of the girls. So we all remained awake—I, in constant apprehension for the safety of the aftermast, the women also much frightened, fearing they knew not what.

I did the best I could to put a bold face on it, and keep up their spirits, but I fear that I was not too successful. My voice and manner must have betrayed me, as also the obvious anxiety in which I was at the constant and to me terrible fall of the thin column of mercury in the barometer.

They, poor children of nature, thought that this curious instrument was one of my spirits, and seeing me consult it every quarter of an hour, would anxiously question me as to what it said in reply to my questioning.

I had been compelled, shortly after midnight, to stop the engine, as it could not contend to any good purpose against the raging storm, and I feared that my paddles, the result of such long and arduous labour, would be broken, or perhaps entirely destroyed. Alas! this anticipation seemed but too likely to be soon realized—for as the sea rose, and the vessel's rolling and pitching increased in violence, more than half the lee paddle was frequently submerged—the floats and framework began to give way.

Just as a faint light in the east announced the near approach of day, the starboard paddle had begun to break up, and the port one showed symptoms of the same.

I was powerless to prevent it, as to attempt to work outside the vessel, when every few minutes a huge sea dashed over the bulwarks and flooded the deck, would have been madness, as I must very soon have been washed away.

My feelings may perhaps be imagined by the reader as I watched the gradual destruction of my paddles—the result of such long toil.

The morning broke on a scene of wild and terrible grandeur.

No land was in sight, on realizing which fact, the two women set up a dismal wailing, which, blending with the howl of the storm, made up a sad and mournful chorus.

The surface of the ocean was a dark grey colour, dotted with the white crests of myriads of angry waves.

The sky of a dull leaden hue—the place where the sun rose, red, fiery, and threatening—and the mercury continuing to fall—convinced me that the worst had not yet come. By four bells in the forenoon watch the starboard paddle was entirely destroyed, and the other fast tending the same way.

But an hour before noon a gleam of hope broke. The barometer ceased falling, and there were indications of a break in the dense clouds. So much so that at twelve o'clock I got a glimpse of the sun, and was able to fix the latitude by an observation.

But this brief improvement in the state of affairs did not last. A quarter of an hour after I got the observation, the glass fell suddenly quite half an inch.

And shortly after that a most furious squall came careering over the surface of the sea, and threw the vessel almost completely on her beam ends.

She lay thus enveloped in a sheet of spray and drift from the top of the waves for fully a quarter of an hour.

The women had taken refuge in the cabin, while I remained on the high poop, clinging to the wheel and almost blinded by the pitiless drift which swept over the ship with the violence of a hailstorm.

The howling and shrieking of the wind was something awful.

In about ten minutes there was a slight lull, and, the vessel righting herself, I crept down into the cabin, for I could do no good on deck—absolutely nothing, and the wind and spray together were unbearable.

But in a few minutes there came another and more tremendous blast of the storm, and then above all the roar of winds and waves there fell on my ears an ominous sound—the crashing of wood—and I knew that some spar had gone.

When this second squall had somewhat abated, I went on deck, and saw that my worst fears had been realized.

The jury mizenmast, which I had managed to get up and support with such pains and precaution, had been utterly swept away, not a vestige of it—the sail or any of the cordage—remaining, save a few broken ends of the shrouds.

Then what I feared happened ; the vessel's head payed off from the wind, and I knew that to get her to lie to without after sail was impossible, and, rapidly gathering headway, she started off like a frightened steed, tearing through the boiling seething sea at the rate of nine or ten knots an hour.

Now that she was flying before the gale we did not feel the force of the wind so, and I was able to stand at the wheel with my back to the storm blast without any very great inconvenience.

The strength of the two women, moreover, was sufficient to move the rudder, so that I resolved, under the circumstances, to keep her dead before the wind, unless I should see land or breakers ahead, in which case I would endeavour to steer her clear.

I found that it was possible to make her yaw three or four points either way, though by reason of the absence of any stern sail it was not practicable to bring her up to the wind.

Nor indeed did it seem advisable, as there was now such a tremendous sea running, that if she should come up broadside on again it was most likely that the decks would be swept and all the remaining masts blown out of her.

And so the storm raged on all day—the vessel flying

before it. Wet and miserable, I shall attempt to pen no more of this tale. If the narrative is ever brought to light in an unfinished state, as I now leave it, I shall have perished, and probably my skeleton and those of the two unfortunate women will be found on board, or washed on shore on some desolate coast. Should such be the case, there will be sufficient evidence of the truth of what I have related so far.

CHAPTER XLII.

I AM LIVING ON THE ISLAND.

23RD JULY, 1855.—More than six months have elapsed since I penned the last. We are still alive, all three of us. As for me, I have barely recovered from the effects of a serious accident which has prevented my writing without pain; so I have confined myself to meagre entries in the log, sufficient to correct my memory and assure me when I proceeded with the narrative that I was right in every point and detail.

The gale lasted with very little abatement for three days and nights, during which time the vessel scudded to the south-west at the rate of fully nine miles an hour—sometimes more.

I reckon that she must have traversed during that time between six and seven hundred geographical miles.

The accident of which I speak happened in this wise. On the evening of the third day the wind began to abate a little. But a most tremendous sea was running, and she rolled fearfully—lee scuppers being buried in the water on either side at each roll.

I heard a noise in the hold, as though something had broken adrift; and with difficulty making my way along the deck, got one of the main hatches off, and was peering down to see what was the matter, when a heavy lee lurch caused me to lose my balance, and down I fell.

I was partially stunned, and when I came to found myself supported by Rachel, while Ruth was bathing a cut in my head.

But this was not all, or the worst, of what had befallen me. My left shoulder was badly injured, and my right arm broken in two places.

And now, as if to make my forlorn condition more dismal and hopeless, I found myself in great pain—a helpless cripple. For aught I knew, I might never again get the use of either arm.

However, when I had somewhat recovered I directed the women what to do.

The engine had fetched way suddenly, and now lay jammed between the mainmast and the side of the ship. It lay on its side, and even amidst my pain I noticed that all my gear of strap, shaft, and so forth had been utterly broken up. There was, too, reason to fear that it was injured past repair. And, moreover, if it were not so, I did not think I should ever be able to get it upon the wheels again, and back in the same place.

Fortunately the fury of the storm slowly abated during the night, and I was able, with great difficulty, to get on deck and into my bunk.

Then I told the women where to find splints and bandages in the medicine chest, and they proceeded, in accordance with my directions, to set the broken limb.

The anguish I suffered was excruciating, and more than once I fainted clean off.

But, by the blessing of Providence, at last the limb was got straight, and, as I thought, in a favourable position for the bone to unite.

I lay for days in great pain, frequently delirious, and without partaking of any nourishment beyond water. Of course I was greatly weakened thereby, and the process of the bones uniting delayed.

It was not until the year had gone that I made any real progress at all towards recovery.

And then it was very, very slow; so much so, that it was weeks and weeks before I could rise from my couch of pain.

I should not have been able to take any account of time, but fortunately Rachel cut a notch every day in one of the beams. I found by this that, when I first

began to crawl about, the end of April had come, and that all this time the ship had been drifting south.

So soon as I was able to take an observation I discovered that we were in twenty-five degrees of south latitude, and had consequently passed out of the tropics.

It was now about the commencement of winter in those regions, and the sun was in his northward journey, to give northern climes his genial warmth for the summer.

The prevailing winds were north-westerly, and I found it impossible to navigate the vessel to any good purpose until many necessary repairs had been made in rigging and sails.

But I gathered strength so slowly, that day after day passed before I could do any real work. Again and again I tried, with but one result—a dizzy faintness, which compelled me to seek my berth and relinquish what I had attempted.

Three months had passed over my head since the accident ere I could use my broken limb at all, or the other to any effect.

But from this time forth I began to improve rapidly, and gather strength each day. I waited a week after this improvement began, determined to give my constitution every chance to get over the injuries I had received. In this I was wise, and it was not till all pain had disappeared on motion that I ventured to use my arm.

I found that even then, however, I could not use the fingers of my right hand, except with great difficulty, so I resolved that I would not attempt any writing save brief entries in the log.

The ship was in a sad state. Holes had rotted in all the sails, many of the ropes of the running rigging had been broken in the storm, and required replacing. As for the decks, they were greasy with seaweed and fungous growths.

My garden was all but utterly destroyed, the seas which broke over during the gale having washed away the greater part of the mould and rendered the rest useless.

Fortunately I had kept some mould which I had got from the island in bags in the cabin, and had also kept some of all the seeds of the various plants.

It was beautiful weather, and the wind having shifted to the south-east, one of my scanty crew took a turn at the helm, while I busied myself with once more making a garden.

This I did in the course of a couple of days, and planted some of every sort of seed. I had also collected what sorts I could find, putting such as I thought had any germinating power left in the soil.

The vessel was all this time slowly sailing in a northerly direction.

I never for one moment relinquished my original design of landing on the island of Tongadoo, and by persuasion, or force if necessary, to win over the natives to be my willing servants.

Still, in spite of failure and disaster, I resolved to take the ship into port, with all the gold intact, and with as little damage in loss of cargo as was possible under the circumstances.

I knew not how long it would be ere I should again set eyes on the fertile vales and groves of Tongadoo, but that I should do so ultimately I had an earnest belief.

Having cleared up the deck, and made the garden in the same place as formerly, I proceeded down the hold, and set to work to get the ponderous engine up again on its wheels and in its proper place.

This was a work of time, and I did not succeed until after repeated failures.

I had to rig purchases of double and single blocks overhead and on all sides, and finally taking the fall of the tackle through matchblock to a winch on deck, I succeeded in getting the engine up and moved to its right place.

When I say that this occupied three weeks, the reader will appreciate the magnitude of the difficulties I had to surmount.

I found that no material injury had been done to the engine, and when once again I lit the furnace fire, got steam up, and saw the fly-wheel revolve, my heart melted

with pride. For though my crew consisted only of two weak women, I had the strength of more than a hundred men at my command in my iron horse.

It was necessary, first of all, to bring my still into action again, in order to distil more water, of which the supply was running short. We were now in latitudes where very little rain fell, and that only at long intervals.

Meanwhile, with wind light but as a rule favourable, the vessel slowly made her way back again in the direction of the place in the chart where I considered Tongadoo was situated.

I knew the exact latitude, but could only guess as to the longitude of the island; so under these circumstances my plan was to gain the latitude, and then cruise to the east and west until I hit upon it.

In these regions of light winds and calms, I anticipated no difficulty if I could succeed in getting the command of a motive power sufficient to attain a speed of only one knot an hour. And as I had done this before, I saw no reason why I should not do it again. I had tools, iron work, and wood, in abundance, and, moreover, as I had former experience to guide me, had every confidence in the result.

So I set to work and made a pair of fresh paddles. It took me two months and two days from the time I commenced the task, and I had one of the women working for several hours in the early morning and evening when it was tolerably cool, and resting during the intense heat of the day.

Yesterday, the 24th of July, 1855, I steamed into the Haven of Rest, and let fall the kedge anchor, with twenty-five fathoms of a light hawser.

I need not here particularize my voyage back, and the several failures I made ere I again saw the high inland peak of the island above the horizon.

Of course I kept steam up all night, prepared to cut the cable and go out to sea if I saw any hostile indications of the savages.

Also did I cause a bright look-out to be kept at night, never more than two of us being asleep at the same time, the one in charge of the deck passing to and fro,

and not even sitting down, lest sleep should come unawares.

JULY 26TH, '55. AT ANCHOR IN THE HAVEN OF REST.—A change seems to have come over the disposition of the natives. I notice that they now crowd the beach **unarmed**, and endeavour to attract notice by waving what seem to be pieces of cloth, as a signal to me to approach.

I have now become quite proficient in the language, and have resolved this afternoon to go with one of the girls in the dingy, which I have managed to render seaworthy, and have a parley.

I shall select a place near which I see no canoes drawn up on the beach, and keeping a careful look-out that none are launched to intercept me and prevent my getting back. I shall approach within talking distance and deliver a speech—I believe it will be favourably received—and if I can't make myself understood, I will depute whichever of the women I take to talk for me, as I have now no difficulty whatever in making them understand all I say.

This afternoon, then, will be an episode in my life, and probably decide my future fate.

JULY 27TH, '55.—TWO BELLS. FORENOON WATCH.—AT ANCHOR IN THE HAVEN OF REST.—All has gone as I expected. The natives crowded to the beach when my boat approached, and they saw by my signs that I meant them no harm. They came unarmed, and made no attempt to come into the sea to meet me. Had they done so I should have paddled away, keeping them at bay with my firearms if necessary.

I first spoke to them, but I don't think they understood me thoroughly, so I told Rachel to address them.

She did so, explaining that I meant them no harm, but would be their friend if they did not offend or seek to injure me: that if they did I would assuredly destroy them utterly—their warriors, their old men, even their women and children; for that I was a great chief, and had for my friends terrible and powerful spirits, who would, if I ordered them, utterly destroy the island and all its inhabitants by fire. Moreover, that the prisoner I

had made, and whom I had suffered to escape, knew all this to be true, for that he had seen the spirits.

To this harangue there was a shout of acquiescence, and I recognized the man in question, who now came down to the beach, and addressed an eager crowd of natives in a tone of voice loud enough for me to hear and gather the meaning of his words.

This speech merely confirmed what I had said through Rachel, that I was really a great magician, and had the powers I professed—that he had indeed seen the spirits, some good and kind and others fierce and terrible, and that I had also called up the spirit of his own grandfather, who, as they all remembered, was a great warrior.

There was much more said, all of it favourable to me; but I could not catch the purport of all, and did not stay to make the girl translate, as I felt tolerably certain by their behaviour that they were disposed to be friendly.

After my one-time prisoner and several others had spoken, one, who was evidently a great chief, came down to the beach, the crowd respectfully falling back as he advanced.

He now spoke to me, and I gathered that they were in daily expectation of being attacked by enemies from another island. He wound up by asking me if I would consent to fight on their side with my thunder and smoke engines, as he called the firearms.

I replied that I would fight for them if they were attacked, but would not aid them wantonly to make war on other islands.

My answer, when it was understood, was received with shouts of applause, and I was invited to land at once and receive their formal submission, which was to be celebrated by some ceremony or other.

But I was too cautious to assent to this, thinking it possible there might be some treachery.

So I told Rachel to make a proposal of a different nature, at which she was considerably disconcerted, evidently not liking the idea.

This was that the chief who had spoken should accompany me in the boat on board the ship, and that

she should remain in their hands as a hostage for his safety.

She evidently disliked the thought of being once more in the power of those who would have so cruelly put her to death, but assented, when I promised her that on no consideration whatever would I harm the savage or suffer him to escape until she was beyond their reach, and once more under my protection. It was the latter that she dreaded, knowing the cunning and wily nature of her countrymen.

There was some little discussion among the chiefs on shore, but as I refused to yield one jot of my demand, and declared that if they persisted in their refusal I would take the man I wanted by force, and would, moreover, make war on the whole island, the chief gave way and declared his readiness to accept my terms.

I believe it was my display of boldness in threatening them which had the requisite effect, and induced him to enter the water and make towards the boat.

When he was within a few yards I bade the girl leave the canoe and go to meet him, showing her that I had my revolver-pistol ready, and on the slightest sign of treachery would instantly shoot the chief and rescue her.

But on this occasion there was no attempt of the kind, and I soon became convinced that there was no intention, unless I should by some imprudence provoke it.

I smilingly welcomed the chief, who I saw was totally unarmed, and if they should attempt to injure the girl was quite at my mercy. Probably he knew this, for he shouted out something to the natives which I understood to mean that on no account was any offence or injury to be attempted towards her.

I now motioned him to take one of the rough paddles I had made and row towards the ship. I myself preferred to keep a sharp eye on his movements from the stern sheets, resolved not to be taken unawares on any consideration. He was very nervous at coming on board, and when he did so, and I commenced to show him the wonders of the ship, he seemed both surprised and impressed.

The fire was lighted in the furnace of the engine, and it did not occupy long to get up steam.

Great was his excitement and wonder.

He evidently believed that it was alive, and made signs to me which I interpreted to mean, could it walk.

I called the woman Ruth, and, desiring her to act as interpreter between us, answered all his questions in what I thought the most judicious way, but by no means the most truthful.

Considering the paramount importance of my impressing him with a great idea of my power and importance, I explained everything to him in a manner which should have that effect.

Presently I loaded a musket and fired it at a mark on the mainmast, which I succeeded in striking. I showed him the bullet deeply imbedded in the wood, dug it out with a marlinespike, and then explained to him that if I had aimed at his body instead of at the mast the ball would have gone right through him and killed him.

This seemed to impress him greatly, and he made signs which the woman told me were indicative of his entire submission to me, and that of all his people.

I took care that he should have plenty of food, and let him taste nearly everything on board; and at night showed him where he was to sleep—in a cabin on the port side, with so small a window that he could not possibly escape.

And outside the door either the woman or I kept watch the whole night. When I lay down to get a little repose, it was pistol in hand, and at the entrance to the cuddy, so that I could instantly be up and doing if he should attempt to steal away.

However, he remained quietly in his allotted berth all night, and I saw nothing of him till after sunrise.

I gave him breakfast of soaked biscuit and molasses, which he seemed greatly to enjoy, as had the women on first tasting it; and made preparations to take him ashore again.

First, however, I loaded him with presents, wishing

to enlist his gratitude and self interest in my favour, as well as his fears.

In this I believe I thoroughly succeeded, and his delight when I smilingly motioned to him to embark in the boat, in order once more to go ashore, was unbounded.

Up to the last there seemed to be lurking in his mind at least some uncertainty, not to say suspicion, as to my intentions. But now all this was dispelled, and when we reached the shore he shouted to his people to bring out the girl and let her come into the water to rejoin me.

Her delight at being safely in the canoe again was as great as that of the chief; and now I thought the time had come to throw off all appearance of fear or mistrust, and make a bold stroke to gain their entire confidence.

So I took a quantity of things I thought likely to be pleasing to these savages with me, and told him that I was coming ashore, too, to eat and drink with him, and see his home, as I had shown him mine.

There could be no doubt as to the friendly spirit with which he received this information. His face beamed with delight, and he capered about in the water in a most ludicrous way.

I went on shore, and was received with acclamation, especially when it was seen that I had brought presents with me, which I distributed among them.

I had gained the day, and felt almost assured of ultimate success.

I now proceeded to sketch out a plan of operation.

Previously, however, I should mention that there was a grand feast organized, which took place that very afternoon.

The ceremonies consisted of extraordinary dances, mystic rites, and songs, all quaint, uncouth, and wonderful to a stranger.

Then the greater part of the natives got very drunk on *ara*, a species of fermented drink, to my palate most disgusting, but delightful in their opinion.

JULY 31ST, '55.—Three days have now passed since I landed. I have got the natives to work, and commenced

building a sort of pier or jetty ; also a house for myself facing the sea, and near to it. This I had protected on three sides by a hastily thrown up breastwork of sand and stones, surmounted with pointed stakes, forming a *chevaux de frise*.

This fortification commands the beach, facing the vessel, and is also protected by the vessel, so that each mutually supports the other.

I have got one of the small cannon ashore, and am training some of the more intelligent natives to haul it backwards and forwards and so forth.

I take care, however, not to initiate them into the secret of how to load and fire it off. I have maintained the same reserve with regard to all the other firearms, and intend to do so to the end, unless something should occur to make me change my mind. Yesterday I went on an excursion, accompanied only by the girl Rachel as a bodyguard, and shot a wild hog and a small deer. The flesh of the latter is delicious, though that of the pig is somewhat rank and strong in flavour.

AUGUST THE 29TH.—This day two years ago all my shipmates were suddenly swept into eternity, and I alone left to tell the tale.

Another calamity has happened which will delay my departure from this island.

The ship has come ashore, and now lies hard and fast with her bow embedded in the sand. She had been lying at anchor in the lagoon, riding by the hempen cable only. This must have been cut or chafed through by some sunken rocks.

However, there she is, and I fear it will take me months to get her off.

I must get the cargo out and float her before I can proceed to arrange for my final and grand plan of escape.

And when I have emptied her and got her afloat again, I must refit her, provision her, and teach my proposed crew the duties of seamanship. It is still my fixed intention to man her with about thirty men. I then, on pretext of just going for a sail or short excursion, mean to take her away to sea, clear out of sight of land. Once I have done that I defy them to take her

back again—for they don't understand the compass, and when the land is once out of sight can hardly by any possibility sight it again. I shall have some trouble with them when they first discover the deception, but I will make such arrangements as to be able to put down any mutiny with a high hand.

I mean to take the ship into Calcutta; and I will do it, nor be content with anything less.

The task before me was no easy one, but I was determined to succeed, and felt nothing like despair.

A careful examination showed me that the ship was so strongly embedded in the sand as to render the task of floating her an extremely difficult one, a work of time and labour.

I had thoroughly established my authority, and none now questioned my commands or dared refuse obedience.

I knew that it would be hopeless attempting to move the ship until the next spring tides, when the water would rise several feet higher than usual. Fortunately the Nautical Almanac, with a brief calculation, informed me when these would take place (in about a month's time); and I set to work making things as comfortable as possible, and kept a number of the natives employed in cutting wood and completing my house and stockade. After about two months of this the pier was completed, and I found myself installed in a strong position, as I considered impregnable. My great cause for anxiety now was the position of the vessel, as I observed that the sand seemed to be accumulating all around her, and, in fact, that she was getting day by day more firmly embedded. I now set to work to remedy this, and kept forty men at work removing the sand by shovelling it away.

This, however, had little or no effect, for the sand was washed back again by the sea almost as fast as it was removed.

This set me thinking.

Some means must be devised to prevent this accumulation: otherwise in the course of time the ship would be high and dry ashore, and there would be no possibility of ever getting her afloat.

After long consideration I determined to build around her a sort of dam, of earth and timber—in fact to make a dock for her, from which I could exclude the water of the lagoon.

This done, I thought I could pump and bale out all that was within the barrier, and then the ship would be in a sort of dry dock.

I should then be able to get at every part of her bottom, thoroughly free her from barnacles, and all such accumulations, and also repair any damage. I could render this dock as deep as I chose, by digging away the sand; and then, when all was ready, I could, by making a gap in the dam, let in the sea, when, of course, the ship would float.

I well knew that this would be a work of time; months probably would be occupied in constructing the dam. But this did not daunt me.

First, I had several thousand young trees cut down, the branches trimmed off, and one end sharpened.

By means of canoes I inserted the sharp ends in the sand, under water, leaving the top just above the surface.

I thus enclosed the vessel with a semicircle of piles, their tops just visible, at a distance from her of about twice her own length, so that there would be ample space to move and turn her when all was complete. Between these piles I drove in other ones, and then an inner row, about two feet from them.

Next I proceeded to fill up the space between with earth and stones, and intertwined branches of trees.

By slow degrees this sea barrier progressed; and after about five weeks' work, I had made a solid foundation.

It would still, however, be a long long time before the sea wall would be above the surface, and sufficiently consolidated to keep back the sea water.

Having thoroughly initiated my native workmen into their duties, and ascertained, beyond all doubt, that each man knew what to do, I started on one of my excursions across the island, taking with me only one man.

I carefully took note of all the plants I met with, examining the leaves and structure with the acuteness

of a botanist. A strange idea had taken possession of my mind. I had used all the tobacco there was on board, and now had a constant yearning for my accustomed pipe.

I knew that the tobacco plant was a native of tropical climes, and thought it quite possible that it might exist on the island.

But not a sign of any plant at all resembling the narcotic weed could I find, although the idea was constantly in my mind. Halting in the afternoon to refresh myself, I seated myself beneath a tree, which attracted my particular notice.

It was about forty feet high, and the trunk about fifteen inches in diameter. The bark was ash-coloured, full of little chinks, and covered by small knobs. Cutting a portion of it from sheer curiosity, I found the inner bark fibrous, and the wood was smooth, soft, and of a deep yellow colour.

I thought that such easily workable material would be very useful, but did not at the moment know what tree it was.

However, a sort of suspicion entered my mind, and I proceeded to make a closer examination.

About fifteen feet from the ground the branches came out longitudinally, each one becoming smaller as they neared the top.

Placing a small sapling I cut down for the purpose firmly against the tree, I managed to climb up to the first branch, and chopped it off with my sword.

The leaves I found were divided into seven or eight lobes, were about eighteen inches long, and of a light green colour. There were flowers, too; but what I principally noticed was the fruit, which I instantly recognized, having seen and eaten it often, though never till now growing on the tree.

It was the bread fruit; and plucking some, I descended, and thought on the goodness of Providence in causing this tree and the cocoanut so to abound.

On some islands these formed almost the sole support of the people, its fruit serving for food, its fibres making clothes, its easily worked wood serving for

houses, its small flowers used for tinder, its leaves for tablecloths, and the milky juice of the young tree for birdlime.

Thinking over all the circumstances of my position, I felt grateful that, though the only white man in an island inhabited by savages, I have many advantages, and a good chance of again returning to my native land.

I now occupied myself a good deal in excursions of the kind, and carefully observed all the trees, shrubs, and living things I came across, so that if ever I should escape I might give a good account of the fauna and flora of the island, whither, by good or ill fortune, I had come.

I shot, this day, a young deer and two strange birds, and then started back for the village, to see how things were there getting on.

I found there great excitement and commotion.

CHAPTER XLIII.

I REFIT AND PROVISION THE SHIP.

HAD I been less sure of the friendly disposition of the people, and my influence over them, I might have felt some alarm at what I beheld.

They were all armed, and rushing about like mad—shouting and brandishing their weapons. A score or so of them came running to me, and I must confess I felt for a moment some uneasiness.

But when they came near enough, the cause of all this excitement was explained.

One of the natives, fishing in his canoe, some distance from the village, discovered a fleet of large war canoes making for the island.

These they all declared were the enemy they expected.

I went at once to high ground, with my telescope, and reconnoitred.

It was indeed a fact, and I could have but little doubt that an attack was intended. I counted fifty large

canoes, each holding from thirty to fifty men. In all there could not be less than two thousand armed warriors, and as there could be little doubt of their object in coming, I proceeded at once to make preparations for defence.

Could I have trusted the valour of my subjects as I did their devotion, I would have sallied out with all the canoes I could muster, met the hostile fleet, and given battle on the open sea.

But this I did not consider prudent, as defeat might prove utterly disastrous.

So I arranged to give them a warm reception should they attack the village.

If, however, they should not do so, but proceed to pillage and devastate the land, then, of course, it would be necessary to go out and drive them away.

They came on bravely enough, and so fast that I had barely time to make all my arrangements and dispose my force to the best advantage.

I regret to have to say that my people exhibited some trepidation at the approach of the dreaded foe. This is, perhaps, not so much to be wondered at when it is considered that they had experienced many severe defeats at the hands of their old foes, and had with the utmost difficulty held their own.

This fleet they saw approaching was the largest and most formidable that had ever sailed against them, and I do believe that, but for my presence among them, they would have fallen easy victims to the invaders.

As I have said, they came on bravely enough, beaching their canoes about a hundred yards from our stronghold; they then all landed, with the exception of one or two men in each canoe, and made for the brushwood, so as to get under and approach close to the village without being seen.

Under the circumstances mild measures would have been mistaken mercy. The best and only plan was to give these ignorant savages a sharp and severe lesson, and, if possible, send them howling back to their canoes.

I had both the cannons loaded with grape, iron nails, &c., and their muzzles protruded through embrasures

made in the stockade. I aimed both carefully, and sharply fired one after the other.

The bang of the explosion was followed by the rush of the projectiles, and, leaping on the parapet of sand, I watched the effect. I saw the sand thrown up in the air in clouds as the iron hail fell all about the invading forces, who were massed together in an undisciplined mob.

I saw many of them fall, and others turn and run; and soon the loud cries of the wounded told me that the discharge had indeed done good service. Some of the canoes were hit, which I knew by seeing the splinters fly; and altogether I counted fifteen wounded or dead lying on the ground, besides those who were only slightly hurt.

A rush was made for the canoes, and I hoped that they were about to decamp without giving further trouble. But in this I was mistaken. A tall chief, hideously tattooed, and wearing a sort of horn on his forehead, rallied them, causing them to stand still while he, with wild gestures, harangued them. I could not hear what he said, nor, had I done so, is it likely I could have understood the words; but I felt pretty certain that he was urging them to be of good heart, and again come to the attack.

He was about eighty yards from me, and, standing on a mound of sand, presented a fair mark. It struck me that if I could, by a true shot, hit him, it would thoroughly dishearten the others. I selected from the rifles one that I considered the best, loaded it very carefully, and, getting a rest over the stockade, I adjusted the sight piece, and took slow and deliberate aim at the middle of his body.

I fired, and almost instantly after the crack of the piece and the whiz of the bullet, I saw him throw up his arms and fall forward on his face.

Amidst the noise and uproar the slight noise of the rifle (it was a small bore, and I had purposely only used a small charge of powder) was probably not heard by those surrounding him, and his sudden and mysterious fall, by an unseen agency, would be the very thing to

frighten them tremendously. They raised the body, and taking it with them, rushed *en masse* back to the canoes, some of which they upset in their haste to get on board, and away from the scene of their discomfiture.

The moment had now come to give them the *coup de grace*.

In a few brief words to my warriors, who were now yelling their triumph, as though they, and not I, had won the victory, I bade them follow me, and leaping over the barricade, ran along the sandy beach towards the crowd of savages, now hastily scrambling into their canoes.

This caused them to hurry their actions still more, and ere I, who held the lead, got within twenty yards, every canoe was pushed off from the shore; the dead form of the wounded alone remaining trophies of our victory.

The fleet of canoes put right out to sea, and made to the southward, towards their own island. I don't believe they will ever trouble us again.

My people wished to murder the wounded left in our hands; but to this piece of wanton barbarity I would not, for a moment, consent, though I had great difficulty in saving them.

Indeed, I was obliged to evince my authority in a marked manner, by striking one fellow with the flat of my hand, who threw a spear at one of the wounded men.

This little incident was satisfactory to me. I had never before had my positive orders disobeyed. Of course no necessity had arisen for a display of force on my part; and, to tell the truth, I was in some doubt as to how it would be received.

The fellow, however, took it very quietly. He went off in a state of great dejection, and in the evening sent his brother to beg my pardon, and ask permission for him to return to the village.

I had never ordered him to go away, but I learned that when a common man among them offends any chief, he is expected to go away, and not dare to come back until he has obtained forgiveness.

In this case I readily granted it, merely remarking that I would have my orders obeyed.

This affair, in conjunction with the easy victory I had gained for them, established me more firmly than ever in the good graces of these people.

I made a speech in the evening, during the grand festival held in honour of our triumph.

I said that I had promised I would fight for them if attacked, and had done so to good purpose ; that it mattered not to me whether our enemy came with fifty canoes, or ten times fifty—I could destroy them just as easily.

I wound up by warning them to be on their good behaviour, obey my orders, work willingly at whatever I set them, and be careful never to move my anger, or they would find my enmity as terrible as my friendship was beneficial.

This speech produced an excellent effect, and my subjects were as submissive and obedient as even the greatest tyrant could have desired.

Now that we were freed from all danger of attack, I set to work with renewed ardour at the vessel, and the artificial dry dock I was making. At the end of a month this was completed, and I forthwith set to work getting all the water out by means of pumping and baling.

I kept four pumps constantly at work, and a hundred men baling with canvas buckets I had made for the occasion.

One of the pumps was worked by the engine—they were all on the California principle—and in a week I had freed my dry dock from water.

I found that one pump kept going night and day was sufficient to keep it clear, and at once set to work and deepened the dock all over, so that when the water should be admitted the ship would certainly float.

This, which has taken but little time for me to relate, occupied months in the doing ; but by perseverance and hard work it was done, and one more step of progress made.

I had still to refit and rig the ship, clean her bottom, and get her into as fit a condition as possible.

I selected suitable trees, one for the mizenmast, another for a maintop-mast: and by dint of labour, and after many failures, managed to get them up and properly supported by shrouds and backstays.

Then there was the task of making and rigging sails for these jury-masts.

This, too, I ultimately succeeded in—the natives proving very apt with the needle when they were taught.

I decided on a sort of lateen sail for both the after-masts, as more easily made and managed than square sails spread on yards.

Lastly, there was the task of provisioning the ship. I got as many deer and hogs as possible, and, for want of salt, dried them in the sun. Also hundreds of thousands of game, cocoanuts, and bread fruits.

I had planted barley too, and Indian corn, and should soon have crops of both.

The voyage to Calcutta should be one of only seven or eight weeks: but I have resolved to provision the vessel, with regard to food and water, for two years; for who can say what may happen?

All things are now rapidly approaching completion; and I shall, after this day, lay down my pen—nor resume it until the grand attempt has been made.

To-morrow I shall begin to exercise the men I have selected for my crew, in working the sails, &c.

When everything is ready I shall take the opportunity of a fair wind, let in the water, steam out of the harbour, set all canvas, and sail away for the ship's destination—Calcutta.

There are difficulties yet to be overcome, and I cannot tell when I shall make the attempt.

It may be weeks—months—or longer; but if I live it will be made.

If I fail, I shall perish; and this will be the last of my narrative.

But I hope and anticipate better things.

But before I lay down my pen, and before I leave this island, probably for ever, I will write a long chapter

about its natural history, the inhabitants, and other kindred topics, which, if ever it comes to light, may perchance be interesting.

CHAPTER XLIV.

MANNERS AND CUSTOMS OF THE NATIVES.

FIRST, a few words as to the productions, animal and vegetable, of this lovely and fertile island of Tongadoo, of which I have so audaciously taken possession.

Such is the natural fertility of the land on this fertile island, as to obviate entirely the necessity of any manure. Bread fruit, taro, bananas, cocoanuts, and yams form the staple of the vegetable food of the islanders. All these, with the exception of taro-roots, grow wild. This latter, of which they are very fond, they are obliged to cultivate.

The banana is decidedly the best and most luscious fruit the island produces. It is in shape long and narrow, like a large finger, and hangs in bunches of a hundred or more on one large stem. In colour it is usually a deep golden yellow outside, when ripe, and inside of a pale pink colour. In consistence it resembles a very luscious pear, to which it is far superior in flavour.

There are other fruits in abundance—the papaw apple, and a sort of pine which grows wild.

Of all the productions of the island, however, the trees are the principal and most important. It would be possible to live on the products of these trees alone, without any kind of root or plant whatever.

There are bread-fruit trees and the cocoanut tree. The latter furnishes an unfailing supply of food all the year round, or nearly so, while as to the other it is put to so many uses as fairly to entitle it to be considered almost indispensable.

Whole forests of this beautiful palm exist on this and other large islands of the Southern Ocean. A sandy soil and proximity to the ocean seem to suit these trees, as they grow sometimes within a few feet of the

sea itself. They attain an elevation of eighty, ninety, and even a hundred feet, and the tops of these trees are visible from an approaching vessel long before the land itself is in sight.

From the nuts they extract oil, which they use for anointing their bodies, burning in lamps, cooking, &c.

The milk forms a delightful and refreshing beverage, and the fruit when young is excellent.

The fibrous parts of the leaves they weave into mats and a species of native cloth. The husk of the cocoa-nut they spin into cords, and twist these up into ropes, for making fishing-nets and lines thereof. Finally, of the wood they make their canoes, houses, and weapons.

The island contains, also, other trees, some of which yield good timber. One sort especially, a description of plantain, I decided to be in every way fit for the spars of a vessel, and to this purpose I fully determined one day to put them.

The *toa*, or iron wood tree, forms the hardest timber, but the wood is very heavy.

Some of the most stately and magnificent trees are only fit for firewood, and some not even for that. Besides the roots and plants enumerated, there are a number of esculent leaves, which the natives eat; but most of these have a bitter acrid taste, disagreeable to an European.

As for birds and animals, there is a great variety. The *kaka*, or small green parrot, several kinds of paroquets, also wild pigeons, doves, a sort of kingfisher, a wild duck, and a cross between beast and bird, in the shape of a huge vampire bat.

Besides, there are large thrushes, which seem to partake of the nature of partridges, a small blue cuckoo, and also a little bird like a snipe, most delicate eating. Then, too, there are guinea-fowl in the woods, exceedingly wild and shy.

Of quadrupeds they have hogs, rats, and the before-mentioned small deer, which inhabit the mountainous and densely wooded districts of the island.

The sea abounds with fish. There are bonetta, dolphins, and flying-fish. Also a description of mullet

and some flat fish, like soles. Of shell-fish they have lobsters and gigantic crabs, and several sorts of mussels. Outside the reefs there are larger fish to be found, the fierce shark and the great porpoise.

There are no noxious or venomous animals, except a sea snake, which seldom exceeds three feet in length.

Of insects there are several kinds of ants, and the tormenting little mosquito—that enemy to sleep. The very noise of their trumpet, loud and long, indeed, for so small a creature, is almost as capable of banishing sleep as their bite.

There are lizards, too, large and small—some of which throw out a most disgusting odour. The natives, nevertheless, are very fond of these cooked, considering them a great delicacy.

As for the people, they, if anything, exceed the common stature, both men and women being tall and well formed. Their noses are not flat, nor have they the retreating foreheads and blubber lips of the negro.

The features of some of the women are really delicate, and the forms of many perfection itself. The hands of the females are remarkably small and delicate, and in shape of limb and form many of them might form a model for a sculptor.

The general colour is a light copper, but some are fairer than others. The younger of the two women, for instance, whom I had named Rachel, was as fair as many an Italian or Spanish lady.

These people, I found, were naturally of a warlike disposition. I learned that about every two years they had, for a long time past, to repel an attack of a savage and ferocious tribe living in a large island far to the south. Hitherto they had always succeeded in beating off the foe; but, on the last occasion, the fight was of a most desperate nature, and the victory for a long time remained undecided.

Their hair is in general thick, long, and glossy, the women taking great care of theirs.

Without exception it is in colour black, or a very deep brown.

The dress of the men is exceedingly scanty; and

though the women are usually a little more decently clad, they will, at a moment's notice, throw off every stitch when their attire, meagre as it is, incommodes them, and appear in a state of nature. This was a habit I had great difficulty in overcoming in Ruth and Rachel, who would, sometimes, in mere sport, thus divest themselves of everything and plunge into the sea, there to gambol like mermaids.

A short skirt—sometimes made of native cloth, at others of only strips of a fibrous leaf—just fastened round the middle, and descending to half way down the thighs, is usually the only garment.

As for ornaments, they are very fond of earrings of coral, with fish bones for wires. Small shells they also use, and the bones of birds curiously carved.

As regards their dwellings they pay but little attention to comfort or convenience. The hut even of a chief is little more than a thatched roof or shed, the walls being supplied by mats, which are hung around.

As for furniture, they are innocent of anything of the kind, and their fishing utensils are of the simplest description.

A few gourds and cocoanut shells, and some sharpened bits of coral and other shells, form all their culinary apparatus.

They exercise, however, the greatest skill and ingenuity in the construction of their boats. The only tools they use are hatchets, made of a heavy black flint stone; augers, made of sharks' teeth, fixed on small handles; and rasps and files, made of the rough skin of a fish. Their cordage is made wholly of cocoanut fibre, that useful tree again providing them with the means of easily making ropes.

Having thus briefly noted the natural productions of these islands, we will say a few words as to their wars and weapons.

Their battles were very unaccountable. Sometimes a skirmish would end in a fierce fight, in which dozens on either side would be killed; at others two hostile parties would be within a mile of each other for days, even weeks, and neither dream of attacking. Their

Savourite tactics, indeed, were rather those of surprise and bush skirmishing. I have known as many as fifty killed on each side in one battle; and on other occasions have known of their fighting, or rather being in face of each other, skirmishing for days, without a man being injured.

Their weapons were clubs, spears, slings, and bows and arrows. For a tomahawk they used a sharpened flint, fixed into a handle of iron wood.

These weapons, especially the spears, proved on many occasions more formidable than they appeared.

For, a savage or savages lying in ambush for a foe, a spear, hurled by their skilful hands, often proved more deadly than firearms wielded by careless or clumsy white men.

I have before spoken of the bread-fruit, one of the principal articles of food.

The tree that bears it is about the size of the horse chestnut tree. Its leaves are near a foot and a half long, in shape oblong, resembling in almost every respect those of the fig tree. Its fruit is not unlike a small melon in size and shape. It is enclosed in a thin skin, and the core is about the size of a person's thumb. It is somewhat of the consistency of new bread, and as white as a blanched almond. It divides into two parts, and is usually roasted before eaten. To me it always seemed insipid—to have little or indeed no taste at all.

With regard to the people, they are, as a rule, a little taller than Europeans. The males are tall, robust, and well shaped. The females of the superior class are, likewise, generally above the common stature, but some are remarkably little.

Their natural complexion is a fine clear olive, and what we should call brunette. Their skin is delicately smooth and agreeably soft. The shape of their faces is generally handsome, and their eyes are full of sensibility and expression. Their teeth are also remarkably white and regular; and their breath is fresh and entirely free from any disagreeable smell. Their hair is for the most part black. Their motions are easy and graceful, but they are not as a rule strong. Their deportment

is generous and open, and their behaviour affable and courteous.

Both sexes very frequently wear a piece of cloth, of the manufacture of the island, round their heads in the shape of a turban; and the women take no little pains in plaiting their hair in long strings, which being folded into bunches, are tied on their foreheads in the way of ornament.

They stain their bodies by tattooing, which they effect by pricking the skin with a small instrument, divided into teeth.

These prick marks they fill with a dark blue or blackish mixture, prepared from the smoke of an oily nut, which they burn in the place of candles. This operation is exceedingly painful, and leaves an indelible mark on the skin.

It is usually performed when they are about ten or twelve years of age, and on different parts of the body.

They do not, however, tattoo their bodies to such an extent as some other of the South Sea Islanders; and, as a rule, it is not at all disfiguring to them.

I was present at the operation of tattooing on a boy about ten years of age.

It was executed with an instrument which had about twenty teeth, and he bore it for some time with great resolution; but after a bit his fortitude gave way, and he began to cry out. The operator was inexorable.

The children go entirely naked till they are six or seven years old; for in that warm climate clothes would not be necessary at all, so far as cold was concerned.

The sides of the houses and the roofs are entirely covered by the leaves of the cocoa nut, which, while allowing the air to enter, keep out the sun, and render the interior delightfully cool and comfortable.

When a chief kills a hog or small deer, he divides it equally among his vassals and immediate servants, which are usually numerous.

When the bread-fruit is not in season, they get, in the way of fruit and vegetables, cocoanuts, bananas, plantains, &c., in abundance.

Their cooking is confined to baking, and their drink generally water or the milk of the cocoanut, though there were some of them who would drink freely of all sorts of liquors I had among the stores.

The chiefs generally eat alone, unless when visited by a stranger, who is sometimes permitted to partake. This, however, does not apply to their public banquets, where they all eat together.

They use no table, but sit on the ground, usually under the shade of some tree, with leaves spread before them as a table-cloth.

The table having been laid, and two half cocoanut shells, filled respectively with salt and fresh water, spread before them, they begin by washing the mouth and hands, after which they begin the meal. Generally this consists of breadfruit and fish, each morsel being dipped in salt water, with a sip of fresh between. The bread, fruit and fish being eaten, they next eat their meat, pork or deer flesh, if they have any, and wind up with fruit, plantains or bananas, as the case may be.

It is astonishing how much food they can eat at a meal, and, also, how little they can do with.

I have seen a man devour three fish the size of a carp, four bread-fruits, each as large as a melon, thirteen or fourteen plantains, seven or eight inches long, and about a quart of paste made from the bread-fruit.

The chiefs and those of superior rank usually betake themselves to sleep after dinner; but what is remarkable, the older people are not so lazy as the younger and more robust.

Music, dancing, wrestling, throwing the spear, shooting with the bow, constitute their principal amusements.

A sort of flute and rude drum are the only musical instruments among them. Their drums are formed of a circular piece of wood, hollow at one end only, which is covered with the skin of a shark; and they are beaten with the hand, instead of a stick. Their songs are extempore, and frequently in rhyme; they consist only of two lines, however, as a rule, repeated again and again.

Personal cleanliness is an object that receives their

special attention, and it would be well if some Europeans would take example by them.

Both sexes never omit to wash with water three times a day—when they rise, at noon, and before they go to rest.

They also keep their clothes extremely clean, so that in the largest communities no disagreeable effluvia ever arise, and there is no other inconvenience than heat.

Their chief manufacture is of cloth, which serves them as a circulating medium, fine mats and cloth being treated as money.

Of this cloth there are three different sorts, which are made of the bark of as many different trees; the mulberry tree, bread-fruit, and a tree not unlike a wild fig.

The mulberry tree produces the finest cloth, which is seldom worn except by people of the highest rank.

The next sort, which is worn by the lower class of people, is made from the bread-fruit tree, and the wild fig tree.

The cloth becomes exceedingly white by bleaching, and is dyed of a red, yellow, brown, or black colour; the first of which is exceedingly beautiful, and equal, if not superior, to the finest European fabric.

They greatly excel in basket and wickerwork making. Both men and women employ themselves at it; and they can make it of a number of different patterns.

Their fishing lines I esteem, perhaps, the best in the world for lightness and strength combined. They are made of the string bark of the erona, a kind of nettle which grows in the mountains. They are strong enough to hold the biggest and most vigorous fish. They are extremely ingenious in their nets, too, and in all ways of catching fish.

The tools which these people make use of for building houses, cutting down trees, hewing stone, for felling, clearing, carving, and, in fact, everything, consisted of nothing more than an adze of flint stone and a chisel of bone, with a large hammer. Of course I soon altered this, and taught them to use European made tools. The blades of their adzes are exceedingly tough, but not very hard; they make them of various sizes, those

for felling trees weighing six or seven pounds, and others only a few ounces. The wonder is that with such weapons they should be able to do as much as they have done.

As for their boats, some of the smaller ones are made of the bread-fruit tree, which is wrought without much difficulty, being of a light spongy nature. Instead of planes to smooth the wood, they use their adzes with great dexterity.

They are very dexterous in the construction of their canoes, the chief parts or pieces of which are formed separately, without either saw, plane, chisel, or any other iron tool. They keep the smaller boats with great care in a kind of shed made on purpose, the larger ones being usually left in sheltered spots near the beach.

Their language is soft and musical, and abounds in vowels, and is easy to be pronounced, though difficult to learn.

It is not copious, but the reverse, as is the case, I believe, with all the Polynesian dialects. Very few of either their nouns or verbs are declinable. Nevertheless they have no difficulty in making themselves understood. The care of the sick falls to the lot of the priests; and their method of cure consists chiefly of prayers and ceremonies, as to the efficacy of which I need hardly say I had no faith whatever.

Their religion is exceedingly mysterious—in fact I can make nothing at all of it. They style the Supreme Being “thunder-maker” and “causer of earthquakes,” of which latter they are in great dread. But their prayers are usually addressed to a god and spirit they call Tano.

They believe in the existence of the soul in a separate state after death, and that there are two different situations in the next life, one much happier and pleasanter than the other. But they do not look on that difference as being a matter of reward or punishment for acts done during life. They suppose that their chiefs and principal people will, as a matter of right, have the preference to those of lower rank, and

have no idea at all of their actions influencing their future state.

The office of priest is hereditary; there are several of them, and of all ranks. The principal one is respected almost as much as their grand chief of all, or, as we should say, king.

The priests are in no way concerned with the ceremony of marriage, it being a simple agreement between the man and woman; and when they choose to separate, it is done in the same quiet fashion.

Slings are among the weapons, in the use of which they are very proficient. Their spears are headed with stone, and their clubs formidable affairs, made of a remarkably hard and heavy wood.

As for their amusements, they are of the rudest and most ridiculous kind. Dancing is the chief of these, and it is accompanied by singing, clapping the hands, and beating time on their drums.

Wrestling is an exercise in which they are very skilful; but they are not strong, although active as cats. I never came across one whom I could not throw with ease, though but a lad, and probably not finished growing.

My physical strength and frame generally had wonderfully increased; indeed, the hardships and fatigues I had undergone seemed but to have hardened my muscles.

Throwing the spear is another common exercise. One set of young warriors will match themselves against an equal number, and the contest will commence. Sometimes it is a question as to who can hurl a spear farthest; at others which can go nearest to a mark.

I never joined in this exercise, though often urged to do so; for I felt assured I should be easily beaten, which would have the effect of damaging my prestige.

On such occasions I would smile, and simply say, no; that it was child's play, and that if I chose I could hurl a spear right over the island.

I don't know whether they believed me or not, but they never attempted to contradict, and I am of opinion that they did so believe.

At other times a man will stand out at a distance, say seventy or eighty yards, and allow a native to throw spears at him.

He has no shield, but merely a club, and with this he shows surprising dexterity, warding off the spears with the greatest ease. Indeed, on witnessing the wonderful skill with which this was done, at first I could not understand how any of them ever could be wounded at all by a spear in war time. But I since learned that their favourite plan with the spear is to lie in ambush, and when an enemy comes within reach, hurl the spear and transfix him.

Fishing matches also come off sometimes, in which the man who takes the most fish wins.

Pigeon catching is another amusement, and one in which the chiefs especially delight. Great preparations are made for this sport. Sometimes all the pigs to be had will be slaughtered to be eaten at the attendant feast.

The whole population go to the pigeon grounds, certain spots in the woods, and there erect temporary huts, where they remain for a couple of days. Although this sort of thing delayed the work I had in hand, I thought it as well to humour them, and even took part in the sport myself.

Swimming in the surf is another favourite sport, in which men, women, and children all join. They take a plunge into the surf, as it would seem to their certain destruction. But however high a sea may be breaking on the reef, they always manage to dive through it and save themselves from being dashed on the sharp coral.

Canoe races, with one party running along the beach, the other in a canoe a few yards off—races on land—climbing cocoanut trees to see who can do so quickest—sham fights—these and many other amusements are patronized by these simple islanders.

Without doubt they are an exceedingly simple minded people, easily contented, easily amused.

Their treatment of their sick was invariably humane, and all that could be expected. They wanted for no kind of food, night or day, which they might desire, if it was in the power of their friends to get it.

In the event of the illness or hurt being dangerous, messengers were despatched to distant friends, that they might have an opportunity of saying farewell to a relative before death.

Almost before a well-built house, they value their canoes. The width of these craft varies from fifteen to forty inches, and they are sometimes as much as sixty and seventy feet long. These were their war canoes, though, as a matter of fact, they never used them for that purpose. All they cared about was to be able to repel attacks, and, except to pursue a fleeing foe, they could be of little service.

I imagine it was a sort of tradition with them which caused them to take so much pride in their war canoes.

They have always sails for their canoes, as well as paddles, but the former they only use when the wind is very light, as the craft are so crank as to be easily overturned; in which case, though it would be as easy to drown a fish as one of these savages, yet they might happen to lose the canoe.

I have before spoken of their skill in fishing. It is impossible for me to do justice to their dexterity and quickness in the water. I have actually seen them stand on the edge of a reef, motionless as a statue, watchful as a cat, and suddenly plunge into the water, dive, and shortly emerge with a fish, thus caught in its own element. They make their nets of all sizes, from the small one of eighteen inches square, to a large one a hundred and fifty feet long.

The fish-hooks they make of pearl oyster-shell, which are tolerably abundant.

They cut a strip off the shell, from two to three inches long, and rub it smooth on a stone, so as somewhat to resemble a small fish. On the under side, or what may be called the belly of this little mock fish, they fasten a hook made of tortoiseshell or bone. Alongside of the hook, concealing its point, and in imitation of the fins of a little fish, they fasten two small pigeon feathers.

This artificial bait is then thrown over the stern of a canoe, attached to a line twenty or thirty feet long, and

the canoe being gently paddled through the water, the resemblance of this bait to the sort of small fry the bonetta are very fond of, seldom fails to hook one very shortly.

No European bait I have seen could excel this ingenious contrivance, and I question if the skillfullest angler or tackle maker could suggest any improvement. As for manufactures, they have scarcely any, except native cloth, fish-hooks, lines and nets, and canoes, and mats.

They are purely an agricultural people, that being nearly the only labour they ever indulged in, until I came among them. Their hospitality to each other is unbounded, and a party of natives might travel all over the island for days, visiting distant stations where they were perfectly unknown, and, without any expense to themselves, live on the fat of the land.

In every village there is a guest house, and hardly a day passes but that there arrive strangers therein.

As regards their liquors, the only one of an intoxicating nature is made from the root of the ara plant, chewed, and spat out into half a cocoanut shell.

Water is added to this disgusting compound; in a short time it ferments, and is then considered a delightful drink. The old men consider that it strengthens them and prolongs life, but they seldom get drunk on it.

The worst part of it is the disgusting way in which they partake of it. A party of chiefs will sit in a circle after a meal, and then, with a great deal of ceremony, the ara will be handed round in a shell cup. The first one to whom it is presented drinks some, swallows a part, and then spits some out again into the shell; and so on till all have partaken.

To omit this part of the performance would be taken as a deadly insult.

I need scarcely mention that I never tasted ara save once, and then I was in ignorance as to how it was prepared.

Though they have little or no religion, they have the most absurd superstitions, some of which I will narrate.

There are a class of men called disease-makers—or rather there were, for I have now rooted them out, and forbidden any one to countenance them under heavy penalties. I gave out that I was more powerful than all their disease-makers together, and if the practice was not put a stop to would have them all killed.

Besides the disease-makers, there are rain-makers and thunder-makers, and a host of other so-called learned men.

I cleared them all away. What they considered the real visible spirits I presented to them by means of the magic lantern, satisfying them that I was no impostor, but could do all I threatened.

They threw all kinds of rubbish and refuse into the sea, in great fear lest a disease-maker should get hold of anything belonging to them.

A disease-maker will, for example, take up a torn piece of cloth, forming once part of a man's or woman's garment. This he picks up, wraps in a leaf, and wears it all day round his neck.

He will take care that he is seen to do this, and then the lookers-on will say as he passes, "See, he has got something—he will make somebody ill by-and-by."

In the evening the disease-maker proceeds with the charm. He scrapes some bark from a tree, and in this rolls up the article he has round his neck, so as to form a large cigar as it were; he then goes to his hut, lights a fire outside, and puts one end of this in so as to cause it to singe, and finally burns moulderingly. The chances are that somebody is taken ill, or has been ill previously. The news of what has been done spreads like wildfire through the community, and presently the blowing of a horn will be heard. "There," he says to those who are watching him with awe and wonder, "I will stop burning; something will be brought in the morning."

The noise of the horn is caused by some friend of any one who may be ill, believing that the illness is caused, or at least aggravated, by one of these impostors. It is soon known who the particular one is who is working a charm, and the result is that a present is

brought in the morning, and the supposed disease-maker is implored to cease troubling the sick man.

The present or bribe may be pigs, mats, a stone hatchet, whales' teeth, or what not.

The impostor takes what is offered, but does not say whether he is satisfied or not. If the sick man should recover, it is supposed by his relatives that the disease-maker has been pacified, and that he has raised the spell. If he dies, however, they will imagine that the villain was not contented, the present having been insufficient, and will probably bitterly bemoan their folly in not taking a larger present to the terrible magician.

With this anecdote I will conclude this long chapter, trusting that it has proved interesting, and given some insight into the habits, manners, food, clothing, and other things concerning the lovely island of Tongadoo.

CHAPTER XLV AND LAST.

SAFE ARRIVAL IN ENGLAND.

[Four months elapse before the story is again resumed in a narrative form. The whole manuscript has come into the Editor's hands, and he has seen the log from which it was compiled. The following is the brief entry.—EDITOR'S NOTE.]

AUGUST 30TH, 1858.—AT SEA, OUT OF SIGHT OF LAND, NEAR A HUNDRED MILES OF TONGADOO.—I last evening put my long thought of plan into execution. The ship is rigged out and refitted in a manner as well as could be expected. I have fixed two masts aft, carrying each a large lateen sail, extended by a boom. She sails first rate, and with a very moderate breeze is going at the rate of five knots an hour. And she steers easily. I am keeping her headed for the north, and shall do so till I give her up to the pilot's charge at the mouth of the Hooghly river.

There was some discontent among the crew when the morning's dawn revealed to them the astounding fact

that their well-loved island was not in sight. But I have promised to bring them back, or rather send them, and have no doubt I shall be able to keep my word. I have succeeded in quelling all signs of mutiny, and as I have a few trusty followers, including the women, who alone know the use of firearms, I have no fear whatever for the last. I believe that I shall finish and put in order this story of my sufferings, and perils, and adventures on the deep sea, in dear old England, the land of my birth. Wind fair—weather favourable.

Blow, gentle swelling gales, and waft the good ship *Phantom* on her course to the mouth of the Hooghly!

Yes, the good ship *Phantom*—for, despite her strange rig and appearance, she is still sound and tight—a gallant bark, with a cargo which I value at over three hundred thousand pounds, including the gold.

And when my task is completed, I shall have the proud satisfaction that, after a four years' struggle with fate, I, Thomas Holt, have safely brought my ship into port.

For the present, to whoever reads this, I say farewell.

* * * * *

[Here the Editor will take up the narrative and finish it. Tom Holt in his last words speaks hopefully and confidently even of ultimate success. We shall proceed to relate the issue of his daring and persistent efforts.]

* * * * *

On the 15th day of September, 1858, a strangely-rigged vessel astonished the pilots cruising about in the beautiful pilot brig off the Sandheads at the mouth of the Hooghly river. All spyglasses were levelled, and at once conjecture went to work to make out what the stranger was.

A big ship, with stump foretop-gallant-mast, square-rigged forward. No flying jibboom, no square sails on either of the other masts, except a big mainsail, over which a short topmast was set which supported a sort of lateen sail.

The mizenmast carried a similar sail, extended at the foot of a large boom going beyond the taffrail.

The vessel seemed to have been much neglected in the way of paint, but it was observed that her decks were clean and her spars bright and well scraped.

Her sails, however, were patched, and evidently roughly put together by no professional sailmaker—as regarded the sails on the two aftermasts at least.

The ship was an utter puzzle, and as she came slowly up it was seen that she had a crew of coloured men, all of them nearly naked.

One was of opinion that she was an Arab pirate. But other and older men declared that no Arab dhow had ever been heard of one-fifth the tonnage of this big ship.

Then what could she be?—English or European, by her build, but not her rig, which, to say the least of it, was peculiar and not elegant.

And lastly, and most astonishing and uncouth-looking of all, were two strange contrivances on either side, which, the wind falling light, began slowly to revolve, and then it was seen they were hastily and rudely-made paddlewheels.

Smoke issuing from the main-hatch, too, seemed to tell of engines below ; but then there was no funnel, and she had not in the least the appearance of a steamer.

All the pilots, masters, mates, down to the leadsmen, were utterly dumfounded and bewildered.

“ Well I’m d——d ! ” was the emphatic exclamation of one veteran, who had not been known to use any such expletive for many years. “ Man and boy, I’ve followed the sea for forty years, and have seen most all kinds o’ craft ; but this one is a lick, and no mistake ! I’m blowed if I don’t believe she’s the *Flying Dutchman*, and that Captain Vanderdecken has at last kept his word, rounded the stormy cape, and means to bring his infernal ship up our river ! ”

“ Who ever heard of the *Flying Dutchman* with paddlewheels ? ” interjected another ; “ no, that can’t be it.”

Finally, the two pilot brigs made all sail and started on a race which should first get near enough the mysterious ship to lower a boat and board her.

The old veteran was first alongside, and, ascending the side, stood on deck.

Here fresh surprises met his eyes, and as he stepped on board four flags were hoisted at the peak of the lateen sail, and a tall, well-made young man, bearing marks of long exposure and hardship on his face and person, came forward to the gangway, and shook him by the hand, saying,—

“Glad to see you, Mr. Pilot. After such a cruise a fellow’s glad to see your sort on board.

“Ship *Phantom*, last from Sydney, bound to this port. *Four years and eighty-two days on the voyage.*”

The pilot looked up at the flags flying from the main, and for a moment or two could not speak for bewilderment.

“Yes,” he faltered. Presently, as he recognized the number of the ship in question—“That’s the *Phantom*’s signal; I myself have piloted her up this river more than once.”

Then he again gazed round him in utter astonishment.

“This may be the *Phantom*, as you say, sir,” he added presently, “but who the devil are all these tattooed darkies, and who are you, sir?”

“These men, sir, and the two women you see, are natives of one of the Polynesian islands, where the ship was drifted. I, sir, am the captain of this ship, and have acted as such for four years and twenty-one days, since the 25th of August, 1854, when all the crew perished by a sudden and terrible disaster. My name is Thomas Holt, at your service, sir, and I am the sole survivor of all the original crew of the good ship *Phantom*.

“I’ve brought her safe into port, sir, with all the most valuable part of her cargo intact. I can’t say much for her rig,” he added, glancing aloft with a smile; “but her hull is all right, and I’ve brought her safe in with all her treasure.”

“Well, all I’ve got to say, young fellow,” the old man cried, “you’re a d——d fine fellow; and what’s more, you’ll get a thumping sum for salvage. Why, the insur-

ance has been paid on her years ago, as a total loss give us your flipper; tell us all more about it. Here's my leadsman; he can take charge of the ship out here. I'm mortal curious to hear more about this affair."

"Come into the cabin, sir," said our friend Tom Holt, with a proud and gratified smile; "and then, over a glass of grog, I'll just give you a brief outline of my adventures."

That the old pilot should feel astonished may readily be believed; but when he learned accidentally, in the course of our hero's story, that he was the nephew of Captain John Copp—whose old friend he was—the pilot's enthusiasm was boundless.

He insisted on having some of the other pilots on board, as many as could well be spared from the brigs; and then Tom Holt, captain and sole survivor of the crew of the *Phantom*, told his story over again.

Tom himself was in high spirits and perfect health, and willingly gratified the eager circle of listeners.

Then he showed them all over the ship, and explained the slow and gradual steps by which he had achieved the grand result of steam power.

As the vessel proceeded up the river the news of the extraordinary four years' voyage of the *Phantom*, and her final safe arrival in port, preceded her; and when the vessel was anchored in Garden Reach there was quite an ovation.

All the vessels she passed saluted by dipping their flags; and a steam corvette, of Her Majesty's navy, gave a salute of ten guns.

Tom Holt was anxious in the first place to hear news of his uncle and Polly, so the old pilot enquired by telegraph, and shortly the answer came—Both well, but Captain Copp aging fast.

Thereupon Tom Holt resolved to be the bringer of his own news.

There were other arrangements to be made, for one of the owners of the ship happening to be in Calcutta at the time, he was offered the command of her, to take her home to London.

Of course she required refitting, so Tom made good use of the time by perfecting himself in navigation.

The question of salvage was also brought up, but that would have to be left for decision in the English Admiralty Court.

But a Calcutta merchant, well known for his shrewdness in driving a good bargain, offered our hero £20,000 in hard cash for his chance.

This Tom declined, jocularly remarking that that would only amount to the Chancellor of the Exchequer's salary for four years—£5,000 per annum; and he did not believe the right honourable gentleman could have done what he had.

And so in good time Tom Holt sailed away for England in the same vessel on board which he had been, with little intermission, for more than four years.

But this time as real captain, with a white crew.

The owners of the ship gladly chartered a small vessel to carry back the island crew to Tongadoo.

There was much regret on the part of the two women, who had lent him such effectual aid, in parting with our hero; and, indeed, they prayed to be allowed to come to England with him as servants.

But on consideration he decided that it would be best for their own sakes that they should return to their native land, there being no longer any fear for their safety.

He was compelled to pacify some of his attached crew by a qualified promise that he would ere long revisit the island.

And the brig chartered to convey the Polynesians to their island sailed away, and a week afterwards so did the ship *Phantom*.

* * * * *

Ninety-five days after the departure of the *Phantom*, Captain Holt, from the Sandheads, there came a strange visitor to the *Haven of Rest*. He hailed, and in response, soon the little door in the garden wall was opened, and the visitor stood face to face with a handsome girl, of about eighteen or nineteen years old.

She stared at the stranger, and looked doubtful.

He stared too at her, admiration apparent in his gaze.

She was attired in white muslin, with a pink scarf and ribbons; and all at once he broke out,—

“Oh! Polly, don't you know me? You are exactly as I saw you in my dream!”

She knew the voice, though it was not wonderful she did not recognize, in the bronzed face of the well-grown young man before her, the pale boy who, five years back, had gone away from the *Haven of Rest*, and had for a long long time been mourned as dead.

She knew the voice, but childish memories—the memory of the old boyish face, still unchanged in expression, though bronzed and weatherbeaten—caused an excess of emotion which prevented speech.

He held out his hand, and she clasping it gave a cry—half sob—and, forgetting they were no longer children, laid her head on his shoulder. Then she found voice, and tears, not of sorrow, streaming from her eyes, said tremulously,—

“Oh! Tom, is that you? I am so glad; and so will the Captain be. Come in this minute!”

“Polly, ahoy!” sounded clear and sonorous on the quiet evening air.

This recalled her to herself, and remembering her position, and the altered circumstances of the case, she blushed, and shaking her ringlets, led the way up to the old ship, saying, in low murmuring tones:—

“Oh! what a surprise—what a delightful surprise for the Captain! I shouldn't be at all surprised if he didn't ‘splice the main brace!’”

Tom Holt laughed, and said he felt pretty certain the Captain would “splice the main brace.”

Which the Captain did to such an extent as to get just a *little* unsteady on his pins. But that of course might be accounted for by his wooden leg and excitement.

Tom Holt told and read his tale amidst breathless silence, all hands being called to hear the wondrous narration.

“And now, lad,” asked Captain Copp, “I suppose

you've done with cruising, having got £30,000 salvage money, enough to live on like a nobleman all your life?"

Polly looked anxiously in his face, but for a while there came no answer.

Then, looking straight before him, in a dreamy manner, he said, slowly,—

"I've been thinking, uncle, that an idle useless life is not one for a fellow of spirit."

"Yes, I'm sure you're as brave as a lion, Tom," said Polly, earnestly; "and now, I suppose, you mean to go straight off to sea again?"

There was a tinge of reproach in her voice, and he answered quickly,—

"No, Polly; but still there's work in the world for a man with any spirit or ambition, and I've got both. You must know I've been thinking of a few years more voyaging. I've got an idea that with my money I might do a good stroke of business, and make my name for ever famous. Only thinking, mind you."

"Well, lad; what have you been thinking of?"

"For years brave and adventurous spirits have sought to reach the North Pole. Now, I never heard of any one who tried to find the open sea of the South Pole. I should like to try."

"Well—well, boy!—I ought to call you Captain Holt now, though, for it's your right. If you must go cruising, go; but I'd like to hear you say one thing. When I'm dead and gone I don't like the thought of my Polly here, sweet little darling as she is, being alone in the world."

"I'm sure Tom will be always a brother to me," said Polly, quickly.

He looked up suddenly, caught her eye, saw her blush crimson, and then, taking her hand, said softly,—

"I'll be more than a brother to you, Polly—something nearer and dearer. Can you guess what?"

"Silence!"

"A husband," he said.

"Right you are, my boy! Splinter my wooden leg—boy—Polly—Mrs. Captain Holt I mean; get the grog, and 'splice the main brace!'"

And they "spliced the main brace."

Then Captain Copp rose solemnly, and reached to him Tom Holt's Log, which lay on the table. He turned to the last leaf, and putting his finger on a blank place at the end of the writing, said:—

"When a thing's done, make a note of it, and enter it in the log. You two have come to an agreement to-day; put it in the log, and both of you sign it. You write it, Captain Holt," he added, "and we'll all sign."

Tom wrote a few lines, and signed his name; Polly did the same, smiling and blushing; and Captain Copp wrote his name as witness.

"Now," he said, shutting the book with a bang, "we'll 'splice the main brace,' having made the last entry in Tom Holt's Log."

And they "spliced the main brace;" and so we will leave them.

THE END

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